WASHINGTON

LUCY FOSTER MADISON

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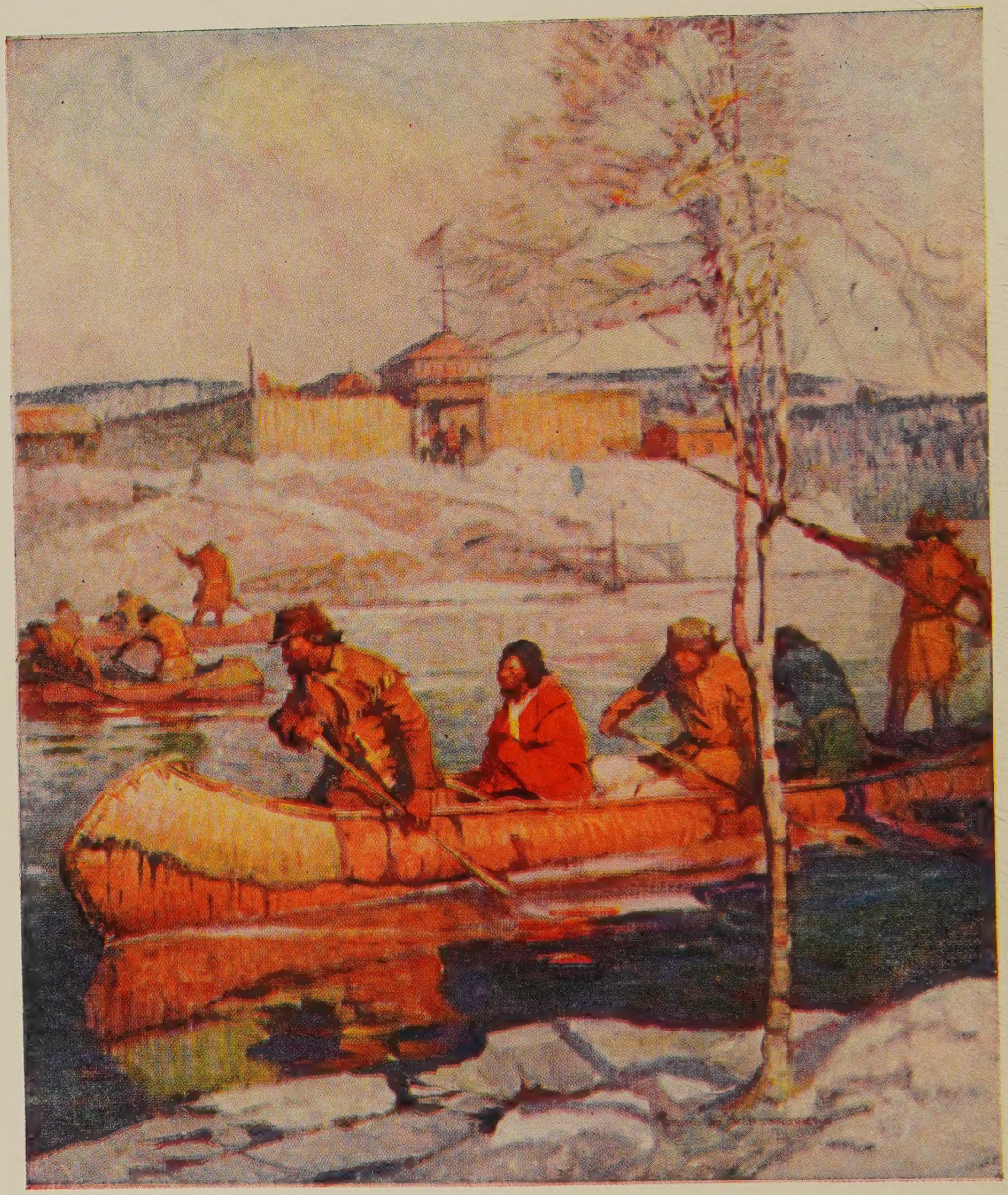

It Was a Period of Intense Anxiety. At Length, However, He Succeeded in Getting His Savage Allies Off with Him

WASHINGTON

BY

LUCY FOSTER MADISON

Author of
"Lafayette," "Joan of Arc," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

FRANK E. SCHOONOVER

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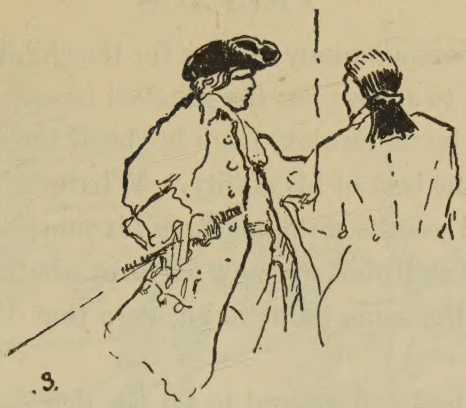


PREFACE

THERE seems to be an impression prevailing that Washington came into the world with his faculties full fledged, ready to cope with circumstances from infancy. As a matter of fact, his character was carefully developed by his parents and half brothers, and largely by his environment. The author of this story has endeavored to show these influences at work in the moulding.

To illustrate his resourcefulness and boyhood inclinations some little license has been taken with history; viz., the torn coat, and the battle in which apples were used. But Washington was a normal boy, and there is no doubt but he tore his coat just as other lads did and do. He did fight boyish battles at school, and apples might have been used. For the rest, the incidents and anecdotes interwoven in the story are those for which there is credible authority.

The more we learn about Washington, the more our appreciation of him grows. He was so many sided, so well balanced in body, mind, and spirit that Americans are apt to dwell upon his lofty serenity and majestic poise, and overlook the helpful symmetry of his full humanity.

In his life there are many lessons for the childhood and youth of the country to study; but the greatest lesson of them all is—that whatever he undertook, from boyhood through life, he did that thing to the best of his ability. Whatever came to him he did well. All youths may not have his martial genius, or his administrative skill; but all may perform whatever duty comes to them with the same painstaking care that Washington exercised.

The writer had endeavored to let the deeds and conduct of Washington speak for themselves in placing the greatness and simplicity of character before the reader; but if she has been led into enthusiasm she makes no apology. Barring the Saviour, Washington is the greatest man the world has ever produced, and Byron's grim remark that mankind has produced but one Washington is as true to-day as when he uttered it.

For the most part, the story is based upon his own writings, authentic documents, and other authoritative information. Gratefully and humbly the writer acknowledges her indebtedness to men of research into the fruits of whose labors she has entered. The list of books read and studied would embrace more than an hundred works, chief of which are The Life and Writings of George Washington, by Jared Sparks; Lives of Washington by Marshall, Irving, Paulding, Lossing, and Lodge; and the Writings of Washington as edited by J. M. Toner.

That the story may prove of such interest as to lead to a more thorough study of the life of Washington is the hope of

THE AUTHOR.

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The New Mother	11
II.	The Birth of Washington	21
III.	Two Removes	28
IV.	The Bent of the Twig	33
V.	School Days	42
VI.	"There Is a Destiny That Shapes Our Ends"	53
VII.	A Journey Over the Mountains	65
VIII.	The Young Surveyor	68
IX.	A Mission to the Ohio	78
X.	His First Campaign	97
XI.	The Coming of Braddock	112
XII.	A Victim of His Own Folly	118
XIII.	The Borderland	135
XIV.	Mars Surrenders to Venus	149
XV.	From Out of a Clear Sky	160
XVI.	Gathering Clouds	173

XVII.	The Hour and the Man	187
XVIII.	Breasting a Sea of Difficulties	199
XIX.	A Nation's Birth	217
XX.	A Chapter of Disasters	237
XXI.	The Ebb Tide	264
XXII.	The Turn of the Tide	287
XXIII.	A Time that Tried Men's Souls	318
XXIV.	The Saddest Hour of a Dark Period	342
XXV.	Caught in the Toils	357
XXVI.	Peace at Last	375
XXVII.	Under His Own Vine and Fig Tree	387

List of Illustrations

PAGE

It Was a Period of Intense Anxiety. At Length, However, He Succeeded in Getting His Savage Allies Off with Him - - - - Frontispiece

"Now Boys, a Rush Forward and in We Go," Shouted George - - - - - - - - 38

Whatever He Did He Did Well—So It Followed That His Surveys Were the Best That Could Be Made - - - - - - - - - 69

The Sachems Sat in Silence After He Had Made an End of Speaking to Consider the Discourse. Then the Half-King Got Up and Spoke - - 84

Panic Reigned on the Frontier. Bands of Savages Were Marauding the Settlements - - - 126

They Were Halcyon Days for Washington with Love at Home and Praise from Abroad - - 390

"Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;
High-poised example of great duties done
Simply as breathing, a world's honors won
As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;
Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,
But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent.
Trampling the snow to coral where they trod,
Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content;
. . . . . .
Not honored then or now because he wooed
The popular voice, but that he still withstood;
Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but one
Who was all this and ours, and all men's,—
Washington."

Under the Old Elm.—James Russell Lowell.

WASHINGTON

Soldier and Statesman

CHAPTER I

The New Mother

WAKEFIELD stood near the head of Bridge's Creek where it flowed into the Potomac River. It was not a large dwelling, but a more pleasant home could not be found in all tidewater Virginia. It was a broad, low farmhouse, built of wood; a story and a half in height, with a hip roof through which dormer windows peeped; a shed-like extension in the rear, and an immense chimney at each end. A tiny pillared porch, over which green vines and honeysuckles trailed, framed the front door. On the lawn stood oaks, and walnuts, and sycamores, and near the porch a mighty catalpa tree mingled its white blossoms with the pink buds of a Judas tree hard by. The house commanded a vast prospect of the Potomac River and the Maryland shore, a blue sheen in the distance.

The estate surrounding the house was not great when compared with the vast tracts of land in some of the plantations of the time in Virginia, but there were more than a thousand

acres of rich meadows, fields and woodlands stretching along the Potomac between Bridge's and Pope's Creeks. It was the boast of its owner, Mr. Augustine Washington, that it was the most fertile farm in the Northern Neck.

It was April, 1730, and light, and life, and happiness filled the air. Birds sang in the sunshine; the bloom hung heavy on the trees in the orchard, and the woods were hazy with foliage. On a morning in the latter part of this April an unusual stir and bustle were visible about the place. From the outbuilding containing the kitchens came savory odors of roasting hams, chickens, and game; the clatter of whisking eggs, whipping cream, and other signs of festive preparations. In the main dwelling the floors were being dry rubbed and waxed until they were like glass. In the Negro Quarters the plaintive moaning of the spinning wheels, and the whirr of the looms were stilled, and a general cleaning up was in progress. In the stables the grooms were polishing the coats of horses and colts until their skins shone like satin. In the barns and barnyards the cattle, hogs, and sheep gave evidence of extra care; while chickens, and turkeys, and ducks gibbered delightedly at an over measure of grain. In the dooryard even the peacock strutted proudly about with an unusual spread to his tail. Every face was beaming with joy, for on this twenty-seventh day of April, in the year of grace 1730, the master, Mr. Augustine Washington who had been in England for several months, was expected home with his new wife, she who had been Mary Ball.

Every face beamed with joy? Nay. In the parlor whose polished floor reflected the blaze from the fire in the deep-throated chimney, for the river mists rendered a little heat necessary in the morning even at this season, stood three

children whose countenances were downcast, and whose miens were sad and thoughtful. They were Lawrence, Augustine and Jane Washington, children of Mr. Augustine Washington's first marriage, who were discussing the coming of the new wife.

" Cousin Clara says that she is very beautiful, and that before she went to England to live with her brother she was called the ' Belle of the Northern Neck,' " Lawrence told them. He was twelve years old, and the eldest.

" When Mr. Thomas Lee was here yesterday to see when we expected father home he called her the ' Rose of Epping Forest,' " remarked Augustine who was next to Lawrence in age. " Epping Forest was the name of her father's estate in Lancaster County. Both her father and mother are dead which is the reason she was with her brother in England where father met her."

" Then if her father and mother are dead she may be good to us because our mother is dead," ventured Jane, a frail little girl of eight years. " Anyway, I hope she won't pull my hair like Cousin Clara does when she combs it."

" Maybe she won't comb it," said Augustine slyly. He was commonly called Austin by the family.

" Mr. Lee said that she was very sweet and kind, so I think she will," spoke Lawrence quickly as the tears came to Jane's eyes. " And now there will just be time for us to walk down to mother's grave before we go to watch for father's bark."

" Ought we to, Lawrence? " Austin asked dubiously. " Cousin Clara said that father wrote that he wished us to mind our manners."

" But that doesn't mean that he wishes us to forget our own mother, Austin."

" Then let's go before Cousin Clara sees us," exclaimed Jane starting for the door.

So quietly did the children slip out of the house that they were unobserved by any one. Jane paused in the dooryard before a bed of rosemary, and stooping plucked a few sprays.

" Rosemary is for remembrance," she said. " I shall take some to mother to show her that I have not forgotten her."

" And I too," spoke the boys simultaneously as they also gathered some sprigs.

" Mr. Lee picked some yesterday," Austin informed them as the three proceeded on their way. " And he said: ' Ah, Miss Clara, some of us will have to give Time a bit of this to remember you. Egad, madam! the roses bloom as brightly in your cheeks as they did when you and I danced the minuet in the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg twenty years ago.' "

Lawrence laughed.

" What did Cousin Clara say, Austin? She doesn't like for any one to mention what happened long ago."

" She answered up pretty sharp, I can tell you. She said, ' You at least do not need any of it, Mr. Lee. You remember too well, sir.' "

" It does not seem as though Cousin Clara ever could have danced," observed Jane thoughtfully. Cousin Clara was an elderly kinswoman of Mr. Washington's who had looked after his house and his children since the death of his wife, the children's mother, two years previous to this.

" I believe that she could do most anything when she was young. She is lively enough now at times." Austin sighed with a rueful remembrance of sundry passages between himself and the lady in question.

The children all laughed at this. Birching was an approved method of punishment in the discipline of the times for any childish misdemeanor, and Cousin Clara believed with Solomon that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. Through the orchard and the meadows they walked rapidly. The sky was cloudless, and gave promise of a perfect day. The leaves of the oaks, hickories, and poplars quivered in the breeze which blew fresh from the river. Mocking-birds and robins were singing in rapturous chorus, and mingled odors of freshly turned earth, wild flowers, and blossoming trees filled the air with perfume. Presently they came to that portion of land on Bridge's Creek which had been set aside as a family burying ground.

It had been for generations the family place of sepulture. In addition to Jane Butler, Mr. Augustine Washington's first wife, and their son Butler, the bodies of many Washingtons reposed here. Among them was that of John Washington, grandfather of Augustine, and the original owner of Wakefield. In company with his brother Lawrence he had emigrated from England to Virginia in 1657, because of the civil wars in that country. The English Washingtons were a family whose loyalty was as old as the Conquest, and so because they supported the Stuart king generously these brothers had been made very uncomfortable in their home, and with others of like belief had chosen the Old Dominion as a place of refuge. From the fact that this Colony was famed for its allegiance to the exiled king and the English Church it became during this period a favorite resort of the Cavaliers.

Both brothers purchased lands in Westmoreland County on the Northern Neck, John becoming the owner of the Wakefield Plantation. " Here he became an extensive planter, and,

in process of time, a magistrate and a member of the House of Burgesses. Twenty years after his settlement on the Northern Neck, as Colonel Washington he led the Virginia forces, in coöperation with those of Maryland, against a band of Seneca Indians who were ravaging the settlements along the Potomac. In honor of his public services and private virtues the parish in which he lived was called after him."

The estate continued in the family after his death; his son, Lawrence, leaving it to his children of whom Mr. Augustine Washington was the second son. Mr. Augustine bought out the other heirs, and so became sole owner and proprietor of Wakefield.

All this was an old story to the children whose minds were filled with thoughts of the mother who had passed away two years before this April day. Going at once to the vault in which her body lay they stood for a few moments in silence before the grating. Then, laying their sprays of rosemary softly before it, they turned, speaking no word as they retraced their steps to the house.

"What shall you say to her, Lawrence?" questioned Austin when they were again in the parlor. Her, of course, meaning the new mother.

"I shall make a bow like this," replied the older boy bending low, and bringing his three-cornered hat to his heart in a flourishing gesture. "And I shall say, 'Madam, you have honored us by marrying into our family. I hope that you will be very happy.' Then I shall kiss her hand. What are you going to say?"

"Well," answered the other slowly, "I shall bow too, but I can't do it like you. Where did you get the trick of it, Lawrence?"

"Governor Gooch bows so," said Lawrence well pleased with the effect he had produced. "I saw him when father and I went to Williamsburg last year. He was bowing to Colonel Carter's wife. Father said he had a pretty way of it, so I remembered how he did it. It pleased the lady." By which it may be seen that Master Lawrence was not lacking in observation.

"And what shall you say, Jane?" Both boys turned toward their sister.

The little girl stood for a moment without replying.

"I don't know," she said at length. "I shall wait until I see her. Maybe I won't like her, but I shall mind my manners of course. Oh, here is Cousin Clara!"

An elderly woman at this moment appeared in the doorway. She was dressed in black, was extremely thin, and wore a high tortoise-shell comb in her hair which accentuated her slenderness. Her voice was shrill and high.

"Children," she said, "Uncle Ben says that there is a bark coming up the river. It must be your father's ship. Let's walk down to the wharf that he may find no lack in his welcome. Jane, 'tis too late to recurl your hair. What will your father think of those flying locks?"

"He won't notice them, Cousin Clara," spoke Lawrence quickly taking his sister's hand. "Come on, Austin. Hurrah! father's coming!"

His shout of joy was echoed by the other children as they ran out of the house, and went leaping and bounding down to the river's bank.

In tidewater Virginia the planters had their own ships which came to their own doors direct from England. Mr. Augustine Washington at this time commanded his own vessel in which he

carried tobacco or iron ore from some iron mines in which he was interested to the mother country, bringing back such commodities as were necessary for his use either in his house or about the plantation. Everything the Virginians used was brought from England. Commerce with any other country was not permitted by the Crown.

Up the noble river a white-sailed ship was slowly approaching. The news of its coming had spread over the plantation, and the tenants and the negroes had flocked to the wharf to welcome the master. They made way respectfully for the children who took their station near the end of the wharf. As Lawrence sighted the vessel he called for his father's glass, and when it was brought swept her decks.

"It is father," he cried in delight as he perceived a tall figure standing near the rail of the front deck. "Father! Father!" And he waved his hat excitedly.

The bark came in prettily enough, and "yah-yahing" in vociferous joy the darkies ran down to the wharf, catching the lines and making them fast to the piles. A gangplank was thrown over, and as a man and a woman came down it shrill shouts and cries resounded:

"Bress de Lawd you done kum, Marster! Howdy! Howdy! Marse Washington!"

Mr. Washington was a stately and handsome gentleman of distinguished bearing, with fair, florid complexion, brown hair, and fine gray eyes. His disposition was mild, his manners courteous, and his private character was without reproach. He responded to the greetings with beaming face, evidently glad to be home again.

After the first rapturous meeting with their father was over the children turned with quick appraising eyes toward the lady

by his side. The advent of a stepmother into a family is always fraught with dread both for the children and for the woman who enters upon such a responsible position. Mrs. Washington was now a beautiful young woman of twenty-six. Her eyes were very blue, her hair chestnut, and her cheeks glowed with the bloom of the wild roses of her own Virginia. Her manner was grave, earnest almost to severity, but the soft blue eyes held a very kind expression, and the thoughtful face was sweet.

"Mary," spoke Mr. Washington, "these are my children. This is Lawrence, my eldest son; this one is Augustine, the next in age; and lastly here is little Jane. Children, your mother."

Lawrence Washington looked up into the lovely face of the lady, and as his glance met hers the little formal speech that he had intended making flew from his mind, and he cried with boyish enthusiasm:

"Cricky, but you are pretty! I'm glad that father married you."

"And so am I," echoed Austin catching hold of one of her hands to kiss it while Lawrence bent over the other.

But Jane, mindful of her manners and the ceremony due the new addition to the family, drew her little figure to its full height, took her silken skirt in her small hands, swept one tiny foot behind her, and sank lower and lower in a most elaborate courtesy, till the folds of silk lay round her on the ground, from which her delicate face shone like a flower. She rose again, saying quaintly:

"Madame, you have honored us by marrying into our family. We hope that you will be very happy here."

"Thank you, dears," answered Mrs. Washington in a low, gentle voice, pleasant with English cadences. "This is a sweet

welcome. I hope not only to be happy myself, but to make you happy as well." She kissed each of them, taking the little girl into a close embrace as she noted her frailness and delicacy.

Thus did Mary Ball make her entrance into the Washington home at Wakefield.

CHAPTER II

The Birth of Washington

AS the days went by, and the shyness of the children wore away, the most cordial relations were established between the new wife and her stepchildren. The boys became her strong allies, and little Jane fairly idolized her. "The Chamber," as the mother's room was called because it was the heart of the old Virginia country house, soon became the haven to which they came with all their childish ills and confidences.

The boys attended a neighborhood school to which they were accompanied sometimes by Jane who more frequently preferred to remain at home. At this period it was a small matter if a girl were deficient in education, but it was considered deplorable in the extreme if she were lacking in housewifely skill and the management of a large staff of servants. So Jane tagged after Mrs. Washington, trying in a small way to assist her in her duties, which were many and varied.

It was no easy matter to be the mistress of a plantation which was a community in itself, where nearly everything used was raised and manufactured upon the place. But Mary Washington was familiar with every detail of country life, and

brought to Wakefield so much of method, and order, and thrift that household affairs were soon moving with clockwork precision. The negroes were no better than grown children, needing a vigilant eye, and they soon found that while the new mistress was kind she was also strict, exacting from them the best service of which they were capable. In a land of unlimited hospitality, such as Virginia was, the care of linen presses, the keeping of provision cellars well stocked, and the constant supervision of servants in kitchens and storerooms were of themselves no small tasks. There were in addition the spinning and weaving of cloth from cotton, wool and flax to attend to; the cutting and making of garments for the family and servants, the training of maids to help in the different departments of the household, as well as their moral and spiritual welfare to be looked after. Mary Washington was not versed in letters nor in art, but she was wise and provident, of too firm a character, and too steadfast a courage to be dismayed by responsibility, so was equal to all the demands that the plantation made upon her.

But if Mrs. Washington were a wise and thrifty housewife her husband was equally as capable in his domain. Augustine Washington's early life had been that of the well-born, well-endowed colonial youth of the period: he was trained in military exercises, hunted deer, foxes, wild turkeys, and ducks; danced well, and had such theoretical knowledge of husbandry as qualified him to manage his overseers and plantations. Of these latter there were several: he owned land in four counties, more than five thousand acres all told, and lying upon the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers; besides several plots of ground in the promising village of Fredericksburg, which lay opposite his lands upon the Rappahannock; and one-twelfth part of the

stock of the Principio Iron Company, whose mines and furnaces in Maryland and Virginia yielded a better profit than any others in the two colonies.

He rose early, breakfasted, and then visited his farms, interviewed his overseers, went over his accounts, and was his own merchant, shipping his tobacco to England, and importing thence in return his clothes, his tools, and his household fittings. There was little luxury in his life. Plain comfort and homely abundance sufficed him. He was a generous, hardy, independent man.

In such duties the round of life went by, until there came a day in February, 1732, when a stirring event took place in the household. The short southern winter was almost over, and birds were twittering in the trees leafless still but heavy with swelling buds; and on sunny banks hardy little hepaticas held up brave heads in defiance of rude winds. It was a beautiful clear day, with the first breath of spring in the air, and hazy sunshine lying on field and meadow.

The children had been visiting at a neighboring plantation for several days, but on the afternoon of this particular day Old Ben, the butler and general factotum of the house, came over with such a piece of news that the children flung themselves upon their ponies, and raced home. Flushed, breathless, and laughing gleefully, they ran into the house with more of confusion than was permissible in that age of decorum. Mrs. Mildred Gregory, Mr. Washington's sister, met them in the parlor with her finger on her lips.

"The baby is sleeping, children," she said. "You must be very quiet so that you do not awake him."

"Then it's really true, Aunt Milly," said Lawrence in hushed tones. "We really have a new baby?"

"Yes, it's true," she smiled. "You have a baby brother. And a fine boy he is too."

"Oh, Aunt Milly, please let us see him," pleaded Austin. "When was he born?"

"He was born this morning near ten o'clock," she told them. "If you will be very careful not to wake him I'll let you have a peep at him."

She disappeared into "the chamber," reissuing therefrom shortly afterward with a much bewrapped infant in her arms. Mammy Lize followed after her, her black face wreathed in smiles. The boys with their sister crowded around their aunt as she threw back the blankets, and exhibited the new baby to their gaze. They bent over him eagerly.

"Hit am de fines' boy dat I eber did see," declared Mammy Lize beamingly. "Mus' weigh erbout five pounds more'n you did, Marse Lawrence, when you was bo'n."

"He looks awfully little to me," murmured Lawrence.

"He is really very large, Lawrence," said his aunt. "And is a Washington through and through. The exact image of Augustine."

"He looks like mother to me," remarked Austin eying the infant critically.

"I think so too, Austin; yet he is like father too. Why, Jane, what is the matter? You are crying."

"Oh, dear!" sobbed Jane who had been tiptoeing eagerly to get a good look at the baby. "It's just a boy, and I wanted a dear little sister. I have two brothers now. I wanted a sister."

"Oh, but look!" cried Lawrence whose sunny disposition was always ready to find consolation for any of Jane's troubles. "The little rascal has hold of my finger, and won't let go. Cricky! but he's strong."

"Let me see, Lawrence." Jane dried her tears at once to peep at the infant. "Isn't that cunning? Please, Aunt Milly, could I hold him a minute my very ownself?"

"If you will be very careful, Jane, you may take him for a tweeny weenty minute," said Mrs. Gregory graciously. "Sit down in this chair. There now." She placed the child in the little girl's arms gently.

"Oh, isn't he just the sweetest thing," exclaimed Jane kissing the baby softly on the cheek. "Just look, Lawrence, I do believe that he knows me. Just see how he lies against my shoulder! I think he looks like me; don't you, boys? His hair is fair like mine, and his eyes —— Oh, Aunt Milly, do say that his eyes are blue. Aren't they?"

"Yes, they are blue," Mrs. Gregory answered. "And his hair is really just like yours, Jane. That will please Mary. She wanted him to look like you."

"Mother did?" Little Jane flushed with pleasure. "Why, Aunt Milly, why?"

"Because she thinks you are a dear little girl as well as a pretty one. Baby could not look like any one nicer." Mrs. Gregory stooped suddenly, and kissed her delicate niece gently. She was much pleased that the children were so delighted at the baby's advent.

"I say, Lawrence, won't we have fun teaching him to ride?" broke in Austin. "He can have my saddle that I had when I was a little shaver."

"And my pony," declared Lawrence. "I have outgrown him, and he stands idle in the stable. By the way, Aunt Milly! what are they going to name him?"

"George Washington," answered his aunt.

And on the third of April following the child was so chris-

tened: George Washington. Mr. Beverly Whiting and Captain Christopher Brooks acting as godfathers, while his aunt, Mrs. Mildred Gregory, stood as godmother.

Thus it was that on the twenty-second day of February, New Style,[1] that George Washington was born. There were no signs or portents at his birth. There seemed before him but the career of an ordinary, well-born Virginia boy. None knew that the infant lying so serenely before them was to be the modern Moses who would lead his people out of bondage. None dreamed that in the life before him he would encounter such storms as only assail the strongest of men, from which he would emerge the First, the Greatest, and the Best American.

The child grew rapidly. He was unusually strong, and unusually large. To the children, as well as his parents, he was an unending source of pleasure and pride. Of the three Lawrence took the greatest interest in him. It was Lawrence who, when the boy had outgrown the cradle, guided his toddling steps, and taught him to stand upright. It was to Lawrence that Mammy Lize first imparted the information that George had a tooth; later, it was Lawrence who taught him to lisp his first word.

"The dear lad," said Mrs. Washington to her husband as the boy led away his young brother after showing off this last accomplishment, "I believe that he truly is fond of the child. I never knew a youth before to take so much interest in a mere baby."

"Lawrence knows that he is to be the head of the family after me," remarked Mr. Washington gazing after his first-born with pride. "I think for that reason he looks after both

[1] To avoid confusion, the twenty-second of February is used as the day of his birth, throughout these pages. It was, of course, the eleventh, O. S.

George and Jane tenderly, believing that as the oldest he should do so. Austin being so near his own age does not need attention, so he bestows it all on the little ones."

And then at this interesting stage of George's development both Lawrence and Austin were sent to England to complete their education. It was the custom among well-to-do planters to so send their sons, and perhaps more youths went from the Northern Neck than from any part of Virginia. Lawrence, as the eldest son, was to make ready to take his father's place when the time should come; Austin, it was at first planned, to fit himself for the law.

Much to the amusement of his elders Lawrence gave Jane her instructions concerning the baby boy before he left.

"You are to look after George until I get back, Jane," he said with boyish disregard of the fact that the child's parents might possibly attend to such a detail. "Of course he will know how to ride by that time, but do you always keep close to him when he is on his pony. He is a venturesome little chap, and will have to be watched closely."

"I will, Lawrence," promised Jane in all seriousness.

Then Lawrence and his brother went down the gentle green slope of the bank to the wharf where the ship lay awaiting their coming, and there took leave of the tenants and slaves gathered to see them off. The boatswain's pipe whistled, and the ship slid into the water. Down the Potomac she sailed, and it was many a long day ere Virginia saw the lads again.

CHAPTER III

Two Removes

BY the time George was three years old a little sister and a brother had come to the home. Elizabeth or Betty, as she soon came to be called, was a year younger than he while Samuel was two years younger. It was a sad birthday for the family; for Little Jane, who had always been a frail and delicate girl, drooped and faded away like a flower, and was laid to rest by her mother's side in the vault on Bridge's Creek.

Mr. Washington felt the blow keenly. He was a warm-hearted man, exceedingly fond of his children; so, after Jane's death when Betty began to be ailing, his affection took alarm, and he came to a sudden determination.

"Mary," he said to his wife, "would you mind it very much if we were to leave Wakefield?"

"Leave Wakefield?" Mrs. Washington gazed at him in astonishment. "Why do you wish to leave Wakefield, Augustine?"

"For the children's sake," he told her. "Someway they do not seem to thrive here. Lawrence hath written that his health hath vastly improved since reaching England, so that it makes me wonder if Wakefield is not too low to be healthful? Since

Jane's death every time one of the little ones is the least bit ailing, I am filled with apprehension lest the illness prove fatal. It may be naught but anxiety on my part, but there it is. I shall feel deeply about leaving the place. I was born here, and have lived all of my life here, even as my father was born and lived here all of his life. It will be strange to call any other place home, but for the sake of the children it seems advisable to move to one of the other plantations."

"Where would you go, Augustine?"

"Further up the Potomac, to the Epsewasson plantation. There is a small house there with which we could manage until another could be built. The land is much higher than here, and too the farm is larger. It needs improvement which could be done better if we were on the ground than from here. I should still farm this, of course, under Matthews. He is a good overseer, and with an occasional visit from me will keep the place in good condition. You will not mind, Mary?"

"No, Augustine. Naturally there will be sorrow at leaving our first home together, but like you I shall always be uneasy now that Jane hath left us."

"I believe that we will not regret the move, Mary. The climate there is much more salubrious than here."

With this the matter was concluded, and preparations were at once begun for the move. The Epsewasson plantation[1] was about fifty miles further up the Potomac River, and was, as Mr. Washington had said, much higher, as it was situated on the heights of the Upper Potomac. There was some cleared land, but the greater part of the two thousand five hundred acres was an unbroken forest whose solitudes, dense and profound as in the long centuries before, had as yet hardly heard the sound

[1] Later called Mount Vernon.

of an axe. Slaves were sent ahead, quarters prepared, barns and kitchens built, and everything possible done to make the family comfortable upon its arrival.

There came a day in the late spring when the great lumbering yellow coach with its team of four horses was brought up to the porch of Wakefield for the last time, and Mrs. Washington, George, his little sister Betty, Baby Samuel, and Mammy Lize were installed therein, and the journey to the new home was begun. Mr. Washington rode by the coach on horseback. Up the Northern Neck they went over a highway that was little better than a bridle path, rough and uneven, its gullied ways and winding courses full of vexations to the wayfarers. They made the trip by easy stages, breaking the long ride by short stays at plantations along the route, as was the custom, the open-handed, free-hearted hospitality of the country assuring them of a welcome wherever they chose to stop.

The journey was filled with delight for George. The novelty of the situation and the new people whom the family met more than compensated for the fatigues of travel. Often too his father would lift him from the coach, and let him ride with him for a time. Once he alighted, swung him to the back of the horse, placed the bridle in his hands, and then, running by his side lest he should fall, set the horse off in a light canter.

"You shall have a pony of your own soon, George," he said as he lifted him off. "Perhaps on your next birthday. How old shall you be then?"

"I shall be four years old," George told him proudly. "Am I really to have a pony then, father?"

"Yes, my son."

"I shall be glad," announced the little fellow gravely. "A man always likes to ride his own horse best, doesn't he?"

" Yes, George," his father answered equally as grave, but he turned away from his small son to hide a smle. The boy was always very earnest and manly so that even at this tender age he was scarcely a child.

In that colony, where no one walked who could ride, a Virginia lad was taught the management of a horse almost as soon as he left infancy; so, on George's fourth birthday, his father brought him a pony, white from head to tail without one black hair upon him. A little hogskin saddle was on his back, and the new bridle was silver mounted. George could scarcely speak from sheer delight.

" He is your very own, my son," Mr. Washington told him as he lifted him to the animal's back.

When George could master his emotion, he said:

" May I name him, father? "

" Of a certainty, George. Have you a name for him? "

" Yes, father. I shall call him Hero."

" Hero? And why call him so, George? I should think you would rather call him Prince, or something like that. Where did you get the name? "

George looked puzzled.

" I don't know, sir," he answered at length. " When I saw him I knew that I should call him that if you had not already given him a name. Don't you like it? "

" Yes, indeed. It seems a very good name, though I see not how you came to think of it, so Hero it shall be. And now for your first lesson in riding, son."

Back and forth he led the pony, under the long avenue of trees that led into the plantation, showing the boy how to sit and how to hold the reins; repeating the instruction daily until George's seat in the saddle was firm, and he could manage the

pony perfectly. By the time the lad was five years old he was part and parcel of his horse, and no longer rode in the coach with his mother and the younger children, but accompanied them on horseback as his father did.

The move from Tidewater proved to be of much benefit to the family, and the children throve in the higher altitude, enjoying the delights of wood and stream with which the locality abounded. The house was at the head of the beautiful arm of the Potomac known as Doeg Bay and on the banks of the Epsewasson,[1] a stream flowing into it. All the surrounding lands were at the time in process of settlement, and as they came into cultivation, mills for sawing the timber for habitations and grinding grain for feeding the pioneers became a necessity. To provide for these wants Mr. Washington, with his keen foresight, constructed a grist and a saw mill. It was his intention to build a large and commodious dwelling, and he had already begun some work upon it when his labors were cut short by an untoward event which compelled another move for the family.

Since the move from Wakefield the years had been folded into the book of time until four had passed, and it was spring, 1739. George was now a fine little fellow of seven.

[1] Two miles below what is now Mt. Vernon.

CHAPTER IV

The Bent of the Twig

THE Old Field School, to which the Washington children went, stood near the King's Highway, about two miles and a half from Pine Grove. It was built of logs, with a low brick chimney conspicuous for its ample fireplace at one end, and was located near the centre of an open plain that was surrounded by a vast woodland which extended to the Rappahannock River. On one side of the door the sweep of a stone-guarded well rose from a yard trampled bare of grass, while the roof, rising from all sides to a point, was surmounted by a wooden weathercock in the shape of a fish. Here and there, indistinct furrows of a cornfield might be seen, proof that at some former time the ground had been under cultivation, but long since abandoned, perhaps on account of its sterility. The structure was rude and rough, but served as an institution of learning for the children of the planters of the vicinity.

Near noon of a wonderful day in October, two years after Lawrence's departure for the West Indies, the Old Field School was in session on this bright autumnal day, and through the open door came a buzzing sound of voices as the pupils

noisily conned their lessons. The humming ceased abruptly as the shadow of the sun shone directly through the open door, indicating the hour of noon, and the voice of the master sounded clearly, in lordly key as he dismissed his pupils. Over the worn threshold came a troop of boys and girls, shouting and laughing as they reached the open air. Like young animals freed from restraint the boys began to romp joyously about the yard, wrestling, leaping, spinning and whipping tops, and indulging in all the sports so dear to boyhood. The frolic was at its height when all at once one of the urchins cried:

"A battle! A battle! We were to have a battle to-day."

Instantly the games came to a stop, and the cry was taken up in a chorus:

"A battle! A battle! Into the fort with the Spanish!"

At this moment the master, hearing the clamor, came to the doorway. He was a short, stout man, clad in a suit of homespun with pewter buckles at his knees and on his shoes. His thin gray hair was worn without powder, and tied in a club with a black ribbon. His three-cornered hat was held in one hand; in the other, was a ferule with which he rapped loudly on the door frame to attract attention.

"There will not be time for a battle, boys," he said. "We shortened the noon hour, if you remember, that we might go home earlier this afternoon."

"Oh, Master Hobby, Master Hobby," cried the boys crowding around him, "it won't take long. We don't mind staying later if we may have the battle. It had been planned for to-day. And we have built the fort too. Do let us have it."

"Well, well, have it an you will," grumbled Master Hobby indulgently. "But don't take too much time anent it. What's the war about?"

"Why, the Siege of Cartagena, you know. George Washington's father had a letter from Lawrence telling all about it. He told us how to build the fort. To-day the Spanish go inside, and the English attack them, and try to get their flag, and get inside the fort. Last time the English held the fort, and the Spanish were the attackers. But they couldn't make any headway. The English always do beat, don't they?"

Master Hobby laughed, and then he sighed. For in that very Siege of Cartagena the English had met with disaster. There had been a combined attack on the fortress by the English fleet under Admiral Vernon and the land troops under General Wentworth, but it was ineffectual. The ships could not get near enough to throw their shells into the town, and the scaling ladders proved too short. That part of the attack with which Lawrence Washington was concerned, however, distinguished itself by its bravery. The troops sustained unflinchingly a destructive fire for several hours, and at length retired with honor, their small force having sustained a loss of about six hundred in killed and wounded. So Master Hobby sighed as he said:

"Not always, boys, but 'tis well to believe so. Ye be English subjects, and there may come a day when ye will be called to His Majesty's service. A belief in the invincibility of English valor and English arms does not come amiss to English hearts. Many a battle has been won because of it. But on with your play, and get it over. It must not be long if lessons are to be finished in time to get home before sundown."

With the manner of one who has done his whole duty by his pupils Master Hobby turned back into the schoolroom. When the teacher's back was toward them the boys turned with loud huzzas into the yard, calling:

"Where's George? Where's Bustle? George leads the English; Bustle takes the Spaniards."

"Here I am," cried a dark-haired, dark-eyed boy detaching himself from his fellows. "Somebody get the flag. The rest of you come on. Who follows Bustle follows to victory!"

"Oh, do they?" came from those who were elected to represent the English. "You didn't best last time, Bustle."

"We will to-day," called back Bustle. "Come on, boys!"

A scramble ensued in which a number of boys hurried pell-mell toward a heap of underbrush, sticks and stones piled on the far side of the field. A few boards and some rails from the fences stood in an upright position before the heap, the whole a crude imitation of a palisadoed fort, the only kind of fortress the boys knew anything about. Over its highest point Bustle raised a stick from which floated a piece of yellow cloth, typifying the golden flag of Spain.

"Come on, you English," challenged Bustle as he finished his preparations for the conflict. "We dare you to come on."

"But where is George?" asked one of the remaining group of boys. His companions glanced anxiously about them.

"Where is George?" repeated another. "We can't do anything unless he leads us. Sam, where is your brother?"

"I don't know," replied blue-eyed, fair-haired Samuel.

"I know," cried John Augustine who had now grown to the dignity of six years, and was therefore permitted to accompany his brothers to school. "He stayed in the schoolhouse to study. I'll get him."

With this the little fellow ran back into the schoolroom, passing hastily the wooden seats carved with the names of mischievous pupils to where George sat in a corner poring over a book.

So intent was he that he did not know that his brother was near him until John Augustine spoke:

"George!"

"Yes, John." George Washington closed his book and turned around with a smile.

"We are to have a battle. You and the boys planned it yesterday, you know. Bustle is already in the fort, daring us to come on. He's putting on lots of airs, and the fellows are waiting for you to lead us."

"Bustle putting on airs over the English?" exclaimed George rising quickly. "Doesn't he remember that we whipped him the other day?"

"Yes; but he's inside the fort now, and thinks we can't do it to-day," answered John Augustine running to keep step with his brother.

Since Lawrence had left for the West Indian Campaign all of George's amusements had taken a military turn, and with the other boys he played at soldiering, and fought mimic battles. It was a natural thing for boys with brothers or cousins, or other relatives away to the wars that the urchins should carry out in their play what they heard from their elders. Now as George appeared in the doorway his playmates greeted him with a shout.

"Come on, George! Bustle's got his Spaniards in the fort. We are waiting for you."

The boy stood for a moment looking quietly at his fellows, then abruptly gave the command:

"Attention!"

Instantly there was a clicking of heels as the urchins suddenly stiffened their bodies, dropped their hands to their sides, and faced front.

"Fall in!" followed sharply. "Forwa-ard—March!" With this the leader himself fell into step, advancing rapidly over the ground toward the fort, followed by his men in correct formation, four abreast.

Master Hobby who had come to the door to watch the proceedings, chuckled at the manœuvres.

"A born soldier," he murmured. "A born soldier, if there ever was one."

At a word from the young captain the boys defiled on either hand of him, and took their stations behind a clump of pine trees which grew an arrow shot from the fort.

"Are you all ready, George?" came from Bustle, commander of the fort.

"All ready, William. And you?"

"Ready. Fire!" shouted Bustle.

Captain George's boys hugged the trees closely as a shower of sticks and stones came from the fort. Then, before its defenders could send another volley, answered in like manner.

"Yield, Señor Bustle," shouted Captain George.

"Never," was the sturdy reply. "Come on! you English will be like the Friar in the Bush, so mad that you'll dance to my pipe when I get through with you."

At this the attacking party laughed derisively, answering only with a fusillade of sticks and stones. It was surprising how earnest both parties became, as though the battle were really one of life and death instead of the mimic affair that it was. None of the participants was over twelve years old, and so all were endowed with the happy faculty of make believe. Fast and furious raged the battle. The air was full of flying missiles, and neither attackers nor attacked had time to indulge

"Now Boys, a Rush Forward and in We Go,"
Shouted George

in taunts. All at once John Augustine crept to Captain George's side, and whispered:

"George, we haven't any more stones."

"Is that the way to speak to your commanding officer?" demanded the leader sharply.

The little fellow grinned sheepishly; then, drawing his small figure to its full height, saluted, and reported:

"Captain, the ammunition is 'most gone."

"Very well, sir. Return to your duty."

The lad saluted again, and crawled away, leaving the young captain standing in deep thought. It would never do to let the Spaniards beat the English, he reflected. Bustle would never have done crowing. They must at least have the enemy's flag, even though they could not make entry into the fort. Presently his face lighted up, a twinkle came into the gray-blue eyes, and he smiled.

"Lieutenant," he whispered to the boy who stood next to him, "do you take charge for a few minutes. Keep 'em going till I get back. See that they do not notice my leaving. I won't be gone long."

He turned, and darted back over the ground to the schoolhouse, bursting in upon Master Hobby so abruptly that that individual was startled.

"What is it, George?" asked he as the boy stood waiting respectfully to be addressed. At this period even in a case of exigency children were not expected to speak until they were spoken to.

"Master Hobby," said the lad speaking quickly, "I am the commander of the English forces out there, and we are most out of ammunition. We've got to get that Spanish flag that Señor Bustle flies over the fort. For the honor of the English will

you give me a dozen apples out of that sackful that was brought to you this morning?"

"Why, yes; if 'twill help the English, George," answered the master promptly, entering at once into the spirit of the affair. "But I do not see how you are going to take the fort with a dozen apples." He regarded George quizzically over his horn spectacles as he spoke.

"It may be that I cannot, sir, but I have an idea that I think will work." George had stuffed his pockets with the apples as he was speaking. "Thank you, sir," he added courteously. "Won't you come out and watch?" And out he ran.

Master Hobby, being a jovial fellow, followed after him, and, taking his stand under one of the pine trees near the scene of conflict, stood watching the outcome with some curiosity.

By this time Captain George had reached his men, and quickly distributed the apples among them.

"Boys," he said in a low tone, "throw these so that they will land inside of the fort. Then, when you hear the fellows shout, rush 'em. We must get that flag, even though we don't get into the fort. But we'll get in. Ready, fire!"

The apples were large, luscious, and red. As they fell inside the barricade a howl of glee went up from its defenders, and a scramble ensued for the fruit.

"Now, boys. A rush forward, and in we go," shouted George.

There was a headlong race across the ground to the fort. George himself seized the obnoxious yellow flag as his followers hurled themselves against the underbrush, throwing it aside fiercely. Then, flushed and triumphant, they confronted their adversaries inside the fort with shouts of victory.

"It's not fair," cried Bustle angrily. "It wasn't fair to throw those apples, George Washington. You knew the fellows would run after them. It wasn't a bit as we planned."

"I know it wasn't as we planned," answered George mildly, "but I couldn't help myself. We were out of ammunition, and I had to do it to win. When you can't fight a battle as you plan, you must fight it as you can."

"That's as true a word as ever was spoken, George," declared Master Hobby who came up at this moment laughing heartily. "If ye will play at war, William, ye must learn to take defeat calmly."

"But it was a trick," insisted Bustle.

"I wouldn't say that, William. There is an old saying that everything is fair in love and war. Any stratagem that outwits the enemy is legitimate."

"But I did not do it when you were in the fort the other day," grumbled Bustle.

"But you would have done it, if you had thought of it, wouldn't you?" asked George.

"But I didn't think of it," growled Bustle turning sulkily upon his heel. Master Hobby laid his hand upon George's shoulder as he saw a troubled look cross his face.

"Be not worried, lad," he said. "'Twas well thought, and William will so see it when he thinks it over. 'Twas well thought."

"Thank you, sir," answered George Washington modestly.

CHAPTER V

School Days

A FEW days before the next Easter George rode with his father and Lawrence to the Hunting Creek plantation where they inspected the new house. Lawrence left them when they reached Belvoir where Anne Fairfax lived, while his father and brother passed down the Neck to Chotank. Mr. Washington remained but a day or two and then returned to Pine Grove, while George and his cousins entered upon a week of boy fun. Alas! the care-free holiday, the last his childhood was to know, was ended in a summary manner. One bright April morning brought Austin riding at speed from Wakefield.

"A messenger hath just come from Pine Grove, George," he said. "Lawrence sent over in haste to say that father is very ill, and that I was to come at once, and to bring you."

Sorrowfully the boy bade his cousins farewell, mounted his horse, and the two set off. After a time Austin told him how the illness had been brought on. Mr. Washington was subject to attacks of rheumatic gout, and one morning after riding over his plantation in a cold rain-storm, was seized with excruciating pains. The following morning inflammation set in.

They sent for a surgeon from Fredericksburg who bled him, but it had brought no relief. The worst was feared.

With heavy hearts the journey was made. Lawrence met them as they reached Pine Grove.

"It is over," he said brokenly. "He is no more."

George bowed his head in an agony of grief. A flood of recollection overwhelmed him, a thousand kindnesses of his father rushed to his mind. And he had not been there to receive his last words and his blessing! He wept bitterly. Lawrence put his arms about him, and drew him to him.

"Be brave, George," he said. "Mother needs you. You must comfort her."

For a moment the boy leaned on his shoulder, abandoning himself to his woe. Then the manly, loving lad straightened himself, and went into the chamber to his mother.

* * * * * * * * * *

All that remained of Augustine Washington was carried back to the old home in Westmoreland County, and laid in the vault at Bridge's Creek. And in her Bible, as the end of her wedded life, his wife made the simple inscription:

"Augustine Washington Departed this life ye 12th day of April, 1743, aged 49 years."

But life, though loved ones be taken, must be lived. Respect to the Dead having been observed, it remained to take up the duties toward the living; and these the mother found were increased twofold.

As Virginia custom dictated, the bulk of the estate went to Lawrence, the eldest son. To him was left the fine plantation of Epsewasson, or Hunting Creek,—as it was often called,—on the Potomac. Its fisheries were very valuable, and its lands fertile. He received also his father's share in the Principio

Iron Company whose mines and furnaces were in Maryland and Virginia. Austin had the old home of Wakefield in Westmoreland County. The Stafford County property, including Pine Grove, fell to George when he should come of age; Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles had seven hundred acres apiece, while Betty's fortune was principally in money well invested. The entire property of her five children and their guardianship was left to Mrs. Washington. Not only must she rear and educate them, but she must so manage the property as to make it yield the necessary means with which to accomplish it; no easy task when the land had to be cultivated with slave labor.

Fortunately she was a wise and provident woman, with a strong capacity for business, and soon demonstrated that her husband's trust had not been misplaced. "She had never been an idle woman, she now became a proverb for incessant diligence. Every minute of her waking hours was filled with a specific task. Method became almost mania. It followed inevitably that she was a strict task-mistress, disposed to be as intolerant of indolence as of sin."[1] Under the circumstances, what wonder that she grew reserved and grave to austerity? What wonder, with four boys and a girl to pilot to manhood and womanhood, that she exacted the most implicit and unquestioning obedience from them? What wonder that the house became an absolute monarchy in which her will was the law from which there was no appeal? In such a situation a woman must sacrifice the softness, the indulgence of the fond mother to the strict, impartial justice of the sovereign, in order to govern well and wisely. It was a weighty charge, but she acquitted herself with entire success.

[1] "The Story of Mary Washington," by Marion Harland.

"All that I am, I owe to my mother," Washington was wont to say long afterward.

Lawrence was his stepmother's only adviser, and as she proved herself to be so capable and efficient there seemed no longer reason why his marriage, which had been postponed on account of his father's death, should not take place. Accordingly it was solemnized in July, and he took his bride to the estate on the Potomac, to which he gave the name of Mount Vernon in honor of Admiral Vernon under whom he had served in the West Indies.

George was now a few months past eleven years old, and the matter of his education was at once taken in hand by his older brothers. He must get a serviceable training for a life of independent endeavor, it was decided. True, he would inherit Pine Grove when he came of age, but it was little more than idle capital, and the income in ready money was by no means so evident as the acres. He must be given the best practical instruction that was to be had in Virginia.

"There is a school near me," said Austin, "that may be just the one for him. 'Tis taught by one Mr. Williams, and report hath it that 'tis a most excellent school. Let George stay with me, mother, and attend it. If you prefer, he could ride to and fro from home when the weather permitted; at the end of one week he could be here in any event, so that you need not lose sight of him altogether."

"That is a good solution of the difficulty," declared Lawrence. "Let it be as Austin says, mother, for a time at least. Old Hobby is no longer a suitable teacher for George. The boy knows more now than he does."

It was so decided, and George now spent much time with Austin in the old home. When the weather was fine he often

rode from Pine Grove to the school, which necessitated early rising and late home coming; for it was ten miles to the school in the hills, but he longed for the best teaching obtainable, and was willing to undergo much to get it. To add to his pleasure, Robin and Lawrence Washington, his cousins from Chotank, attended the same school. The three lads were often together, their common studies and recreations making them great friends. Often too they went home with George to stay from Friday until Monday, much to the joy of the younger children who were permitted to share all the sports and pastimes.

On one such occasion the boys were making the rounds of the plantation, seeking diversion in different ways, when at length they came to the stables where Madam Washington, as she now came to be called, had a number of fine horses. Among these was a sorrel colt of which the lady was very fond, and which was yet unbroken. Now it so happened that Mr. Williams had but recently related to his pupils the story of Alexander and the wild horse Bucephalus. He told them how unmanageable the horse was, and that he was so vicious that King Philip was displeased that such an animal should be brought to him to buy. But Alexander, who had observed him well, made an agreement with his father to ride the horse, or else to forfeit his price to the king. And he did ride him so that he became a fine, useful animal.

This incident was in the minds of the lads as they watched the fiery colt cavorting about the barnyard, and presently Robin said:

"What a pity it is, George, that Alexander is not here to break that colt for Aunt Mary!"

George turned his steady gray-blue eyes upon his cousin.

"My mother does not need Alexander, nor any one else to break her horses when I am here," he said.

Robin laughed teasingly.

"I know that you are a good horseman, George," he remarked, "but you would not dare to try to break that colt."

There never yet lived a boy of adventurous spirit who would not take a dare, and so in this instance George immediately took up the challenge.

"He ought to be broken," he said. "I will do it now."

But at this his cousins and his younger brothers, frightened at the mere idea of such an attempt, crowded about him and tried to dissuade him from the venture. The boy's blood was up, however, and he would not listen.

"He ought to be broken," he said. "He is of no use the way he is, and mother will be pleased to have it done. It should have been done long ago."

Someway he managed to catch the colt, and to get him bridled and saddled. Then, despite the animal's plunging, he sprang lightly to the saddle, secured a safe seat, and the fight between boy and beast for the mastery was on. In great distress the boys watched the two, scarcely daring to breathe so fearful were they of the outcome. The fiery creature reared and plunged in the vain effort to dislodge the lad from his back. Effort after effort the colt made to throw him, but George clung to his seat tenaciously. After a time, snorting and plunging this way and that in frantic attempts to disengage himself from the rider, the horse gave a mighty leap upward, broke a blood vessel, and came to the ground in a dying condition. George, who had sprung from his back as he fell, stood looking down at him soberly. The other lads

came silently to his side. After an interval Robin spoke in awed tones.

"What will Aunt Mary say?" he questioned.

"I don't know, Robin. She won't be pleased. He was a valuable animal. But she will have to be told just how it happened."

Quietly they returned to the house, entering it just as dinner was served. Madam Washington called them, and thoughtfully they took their seats at table. The lady observed them with some curiosity. Usually there was much ado to keep their young spirits down to the decorum of dining, but to-day every boy seemed depressed, and responded even to Betty's sallies briefly. She was proud of her stables, and knowing that the youngsters had been there observed:

"And did George show you the sorrel colt, boys? He bids fair to be a fine horse, although just at present the grooms seem to have some trouble with him."

For a long moment no one spoke. The lads exchanged apprehensive glances. George would rather have tried to break another colt than to face his mother with the tale that must be told. There was no help for it, however; there had to be an accounting. He plunged into it boldly:

"Mother, the sorrel colt will be no more trouble," he said. "He is dead."

"Dead?" she exclaimed. "My son, that cannot be. I have not been informed of such a catastrophe."

"But it is true, mother; for I—I killed him." With this he stated simply and clearly how the matter had occurred.

Mrs. Washington's face became suffused with anger. Mother and son were much alike in temperament and disposition. It was from her that George inherited his high temper

and spirit of command. Now as the two gazed steadily at each other, the other lads grew tense with expectation. Years afterward one of the cousins, writing of this period of her life, said:

"I was often at Pine Grove with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother, I was more afraid than of my own parents; she awed me in the midst of her kindness."

So now the boys watched mother and son with baited breath. The lady struggled with herself for a few moments, and then spoke calmly:

"I am sorry indeed that the colt is dead, my son. It was an animal of great worth, but I rejoice that you have told me at once about the happening. I prize the truth more than money."[1]

A sigh of relief went up from the boys. The dinner which had been neglected now appealed to them, and they fell to with relish.

But George was not to escape without some punishment. Busy woman that she was Mary Washington daily gathered her children about her for a few moments of reading from some standard work that would impress them with lessons of religion and morality. Her favorite volume for this purpose was Sir Matthew Hale's "Contemplations, Moral and Divine." On this day, after the reading, she gave the book to George, open at the essay The Great Audit.

"I desire that you commit this to memory, George," she said.

Obediently the boy took the book, and set himself to the task. He was a capable, executive lad, and whenever anything was

[1] This incident given in G. W. Parke-Custis' "Reminiscences of George Washington."

assigned him to do he mastered it thoroughly. He had had many lessons from the "Contemplations," though they were not often given as punishments. The admirable axioms contained therein sank deep into his mind, and had great influence in forming his character. In after years the closing words of the essay committed to memory on this day recurred to mind many times:

"When THY honor, or the good of my country was concerned, I then thought it was a seasonable time to lay out my reputation for the advantage of either, and to act with it, and by it, and upon it, to the highest, in the use of all lawful means. And upon such an occasion, the counsel of Mordecai to Esther was my encouragement: 'Who knows whether God has not given thee this reputation and esteem for such a time as this?'"

Earnestly the lad conned the words, pondering them, little thinking that the time would come when they would be as applicable to him as they had been to England's great chief-justice.

So the episode of the colt passed, and was forgotten. But the spirit which the boy displayed in trying to master the untamed animal was the spirit with which he tried to overcome every obstacle. He loved mastery, and he relished acquiring the most effective means of mastery in all practical affairs. His education was plain and practical, but nothing less than knowing everything that was to be known concerning every problem that was set before him satisfied him. He never romped after his father's death, but he did practice all kinds of athletic exercises, such as running, leaping, wrestling, pitching quoits, and tossing bars. A school is a miniature world in which he who excels his fellows is respected and looked up to by them. So because he could outwalk, outrun and outride them George

was a leader among his schoolmates. He was a tall, active, muscular boy, and apparently his feats of physical prowess were attended by so little effort that his mates wondered thereat. One such exhibition was long remembered by the boys of the school.

In the last term of his second year at Mr. Williams' school a boy, large and robust, entered and of such strength was he that he was given to much boasting. One day a trial of wrestling took place among the lads, and this boy worsted two of the best wrestlers of the school. Then, vaingloriously, he strode about the yard, calling for others to come and try to throw him.

George Washington had taken no part in the contest of skill, but had retired to the shade of a tree where he sat deeply engaged in study. He was thirteen at this time, and life had become a more earnest matter so that he was given to studying while his companions played. School was drawing to a close and he wished to make the most of the time that remained.

"There can't anybody in Virginia throw me," boasted the champion strutting about like a peacock, hands in his pockets.

George, intent upon his book, paid no heed to the lad who walked round and round the tree trying to attract his attention. At length the champion called loudly:

"Why don't you come and try, George Washington? Are you afraid that you are letting on that you're studying? Own up that I am the best wrestler in school or else come and throw me. Don't though, if you're afraid."

George closed his book, and looked up quietly at the boaster.

"Afraid of what?" he asked.

"Of me." The boy threw himself back pompously. "You can't throw me, and you know it."

"I have never yet known what fear is," calmly remarked

George. "It is time to learn. Come on." Without troubling to take off his coat he rose, and walked over to where the schoolboys were already forming a ring.

The two antagonists entered the arena thus formed, and grappled. The struggle was fierce but momentary. In the strong grasp of George the boaster soon found that he had met his more than match. He was powerless, and when George hurled him to the ground with a force that seemed to jar the marrow of his bones, he lay there; nor would he rise until his adversary had left the ring. He had had enough.

The boys shouted in delight at George's triumph, but in no wise elated he calmly picked up his book, and resumed his reading.

CHAPTER VI

"There Is a Destiny That Shapes Our Ends"

LIFE at Pine Grove, save that it was more frugal, went on in much the same way as it had when the father lived. Mrs. Washington was too wise a woman to alter one tittle of the training which her husband had thought best for his children. She rose at four in the morning, and went over the fields and meadows, keeping every transaction of the place under her eye. Frequently she took one of her sons with her that he too might become versed in agriculture. In this way George came to know the yield of every patch to a hogshead and the pound piece to a farthing. He grew to understand as well as another the method of curing the leaf, although his mother came to discard the raising of tobacco, deeming its culture too hazardous. It was, in fact, a treacherous crop, subject to worms, sensitive to weather, and she was too sensible to take many risks.

During vacations George passed much time at Mount Vernon. The affection between the two brothers had increased since the death of their father, and Lawrence liked to have the boy with him whenever practicable. Madam Washington

sanctioned the intimacy, feeling that her son was fortunate in possessing such a guide and friend. Lawrence was deservedly becoming quite a prominent man in affairs of the Colony, and a sojourn with him brought George into contact with men of worth.

Lawrence's father-in-law, the Honorable William Fairfax, lived in a beautiful home, called Belvoir, just a few miles south of Mount Vernon. It was one of the chief social centres of the tidewater region of the Old Dominion, with always open doors and a generous hospitality for the coming guest. Its master was a man of extensive reading, travel and study in foreign lands. "His mind had been enriched and ripened by varied and adventurous experiences. Of an ancient English family in Yorkshire, he had entered the army at the age of twenty-one; had served with honor both in the East and West Indies, and officiated as Governor of New Providence, after having rescued it from pirates. For some years past he had resided in Virginia to manage the immense landed estates of his cousin, Lord Fairfax, and lived at Belvoir in the style of an English country gentleman, surrounded by an intelligent and cultivated family of sons and daughters." [1]

The society met in these two mansions was a liberal education for the country boy. The brilliant men and dainty women with their courtly manners, easy dignity and stately demeanor created a desire in him to be as they were, and to acquit himself well in their society. To this end he compiled a set of rules on etiquette and behavior, carefully writing them out. There were one hundred and twenty of the "Rules for Behavior in Conversation and Company," some of them very trivial, others quaint, but in the "main a better manual of con-

[1] "Life of George Washington," by Washington Irving.

duct could not be put into the hands of youth."[1] Then he set himself rigidly to observe them, so disciplining himself that he learned that self-control for which he was noted. And thus wrote the thirteen-year-old boy:

I. "Read no letters, books, or papers in company; but when there is necessity for doing it you must ask leave. Come not near the books, or writings of any one so as to read them unless so desired; nor give your opinion of them unasked. Also look not nigh when another is writing a letter.

II. "Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he were your enemy.

III. "Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

IV. "Wherein you reprove another, be unblamable yourself; for example is more prevalent than precept.

V. "Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any.

VI. "In your apparel be modest, and endeavor to accommodate nature rather than to procure admiration.

VII. "Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for it is better to be alone than in bad company.

VIII. "Whisper not in the company of others.

IX. "Be not apt to relate news if you know not the truth thereof.

X. "Be not curious to know the affairs of others; neither approach to those that speak in private.

XI. "Undertake not what you cannot perform; but be careful to keep your promise.

XII. "Speak not evil of the absent for it is unjust.

[1] "Life of Washington," by Washington Irving.

XIII. "When you speak of God or His attributes let it be seriously, in reverence.

XIV. "Let your recreations be manful, not sinful.

XV. "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

It was no ordinary boy who wrote and pondered this series of rules. It indicated a depth and thoughtfulness certainly most unusual in one of his age.

Among the visitors at Mount Vernon there were often comrades of Lawrence's of the colonial regiment which had gone to the West Indies. Sometimes too ships of war from Admiral Vernon's fleet would come up the river, and the officers would be welcome guests of Lawrence and his father-in-law. Then, grouped about a cheery fire, if the weather were bad, or gathered on the verandah with the beautiful Potomac, broad and deep, flowing seaward before them the army and navy men would fight their battles over again, and tales would be told of military events on sea and land. "The capture of Porto Bello; the bombardment of Cartagena; old stories of cruisings in the East and West Indies, and campaigns against the pirates." With beating heart and kindling eyes George listened to these conversations, and the martial fire that had glowed in his great-grandfather John, and sent his beloved brother Lawrence to the West Indies mounted high. He had the soul of a warrior which was seeking to find expression in service of some sort. He longed to go down to the sea in ships, to see strange lands, and to do great deeds. So the lure of the sea came upon him. It called to him in the soft breezes which swept over the land from the ocean; it beckoned him in the waves that broke upon the shore; it wooed him in the singing wakes of the stately ships that went sliding out to sea. He

heard it in the spirit of the storm. There would be enterprise, adventure. It seemed the outlet that his nature craved.

He was a shy boy, and found it not easy to speak of his enthusiasms or desires. One night, however, when the guests had retired to their rooms, and Lawrence sat alone before the fire in the parlor, George mustered up courage to speak to him.

"Lawrence," he said with diffidence, "I would like to go to sea. Do you think it could be managed?"

Lawrence did not reply for a moment, but regarded him earnestly.

"Do you think that you would like that better than the army, George?"

"No, Lawrence; but there is no chance of my going into the army, and this would be immediate."

"And your mother? Do you think she would consent?" Lawrence did not evince surprise at the boy's expressed desire. He had watched his growing interest in the tales of the sea, and sympathized with the lad's craving for enterprise. Virginians were all loyal subjects of England's King, and there seemed every chance for a brave and clever youth in a navy like Great Britain's. In fact, Lawrence considered the naval service a popular path to fame and fortune, but he feared that Madam Washington would not so view it. So, shaking his head, he said, "But your mother would not consent."

"Do you think it so impossible, Lawrence?" asked his brother wistfully.

"It seems so to me, George, but —— Well, we'll see what can be done. I believe that a commission as a midshipman might be obtained for you. Mr. Fairfax and I have watched you closely, and we have known for some time how you felt on the matter. You were born for the service, but your greatest

difficulty lies with mother. If we can obtain her consent, I am quite sure that everything could be arranged. I'll tell you: I'll go back with you to Pine Grove, and we'll talk to her."

"Oh, Lawrence, will you?" cried George overjoyed at finding his brother so sympathetic. "How good you are to me! I am sure that mother will give her consent if you talk to her. She thinks a great deal of your opinion, and 'twill have great weight if you broach the subject. Oh, it would be glorious to go!"

"Well, we can but try," said his brother again, but his tone was not hopeful.

Lawrence's visits were always hailed with delight at Pine Grove, and now he gave himself to being more than usually agreeable. Madam Washington talked over farm matters with him, and the next morning he rose early, and accompanied her on her rounds of the plantation. Her crops and her methods alike appealed to him, and he commended both warmly. It was not until they started to return to the house that he introduced the subject of the navy.

"George grows tall, does he not, mother? He is almost as tall as I am."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Washington. "He has always been large for his age, and hath grown greatly of late. Since his father's death he seems more like a man than a boy."

"So I think," agreed Lawrence heartily. "Have you thought what he will take up as a profession, madam mother?"

His stepmother gave him a startled glance.

"Surely there is time enough for that, Lawrence. He is only fourteen. It will be several years yet before it need be decided upon."

"He does not think so, mother. He feels that he is old

enough to begin man's work now. In truth, many of us agree with him. He is a lad of promise, and Lord Fairfax and Mr. Fairfax will gladly use their influence to get him a commission as a midshipman. George wishes very much to go."

"The navy?" The mother gasped. "Lawrence, that is parlous like soldiering, and I wish not for him to be in warfare of any kind."

"But, mother, if he were to go as midshipman on a King's vessel, confined to American waters, he would not see much war, and might never be sent to Europe at all. He is venturesome; hath always been so, and a life at sea would gratify his love of action. And too he would be under strict supervision of superiors, and would not be permitted to run unnecessary risks. There is much to commend it. Don't you think so?"

"No, no," she cried with passion. "I could not bear it. I could not let him go. Why, Lawrence, he is my oldest son!"

"I know, mother," he said gently. "But don't decide too hastily. Talk with George first, and then think upon it. He hath set his heart upon it, and it is right that the matter should be given consideration, if only for that reason. I am sure that, with Mr. Fairfax's influence, I could get him a commission, and it may open a great future for him. Talk with him, mother."

After a time she agreed to this, and later had a long talk with the boy. George eagerly opened up his heart to her, and told her how much he desired it, and that it might mean that he could obtain distinction. After much persuasion on the part of Lawrence she yielded a reluctant consent, stipulating only that the matter should not be regarded as fully settled until she could get the advice of her brother, Joseph Ball, who lived in London. She had great faith in his judgment, and should he approve she would give her unqualified approval. It was a

reluctant consent, for the mother did not relish the idea of parting with her oldest son, and by writing to her brother in London could put off the decision for six months; the time that must elapse before a letter could go and come from Joseph. To this the brothers agreed gladly.

"For," laughed Lawrence, "it will take about that length of time to get the commission, George. I think that we may regard the matter as settled. Any man who knows anything about the navy will know that it is a great chance for you. Your mother but seeks to delay matters."

So Lawrence departed, and at once began negotiations for the coveted commission. It was not easy. They were eagerly sought for, and could be obtained only by the payment of a large sum of money, or by political influence. Meantime George, so delighted that he could scarcely contain his emotion, rode down to Chotank to tell his cousins about the matter, and friends came daily to congratulate him, and to talk it over. Betty and the young brothers hovered about him, full of admiring wonder. The mother alone was sad. A friend of the family wrote to Lawrence confidentially:

"I am afraid that Mrs. Washington will not keep up to her first resolution. She seems to dislike George's going to sea, and says several persons have told her that it was a bad scheme. She offers several trifling objections, such as a fond, unthinking mother habitually suggests, and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it."

This letter gave Lawrence some anxiety, and he pushed matters rapidly. Going to Alexandria he outfitted his brother with a new midshipman's uniform and all necessary equipment, and when at length the commission came rode at once to Pine Grove with it.

George was standing on the porch when Lawrence rode up and dismounted. His face lighted up at sight of him, and as the elder brother waved a paper with some excitement he cried breathlessly:

"Has it come, Lawrence?"

"Yes; at last, George. The sloop of war, *Drake,* came into the Potomac yesterday. The captain himself brought this over that no time might be lost in getting it to you. Let me be the first to congratulate you, George. You are Midshipman Washington now. I wish you well, my brother, and hope that some day it will be Admiral Washington."

"If it ever is it will be owing to you, Lawrence," answered the boy flushing with pleasure. "Oh, Lawrence, how can I thank you?"

"Don't try. I know how you feel, so say no more about it. I believe that it gives me as much pleasure as it does you."

"And when am I to join the *Drake,* Lawrence?"

"The end of the week. That will give you to-day to say good-bye to every one here, and then to-morrow we will start for Mount Vernon which we shall reach the day after. The day following that you must report for duty. Go now, and put on your uniform that we may all see how you look in it."

Eagerly George ran up to his room, leaving his brother to tell the great news to the family. He had been very patient, and he was glad that the waiting was ended. It had been February when the matter was begun, and now August had brought purple tops to the ironweed. Yes; it had been a long wait. He had not known until now how much of anxiety he had felt that he might not get the coveted commission.

Enthusiastically he donned the smart midshipman uniform. On his head he placed the jaunty cap, and stuck the dirk that

gave the true martial touch in his belt. The result afforded him boyish delight, and so pleased was he at his appearance that he stood for several moments admiring his reflection in the mirror. Then, chiding himself for his vanity, he ran downstairs into the parlor where the family awaited him.

"What do you think of me, mother?" he asked as, laughing and blushing, he turned round and round for inspection.

There was no reply, and the boy glanced from one to another in amazement, so strangely did they regard him. Lawrence's face was overcast with gloom; the children were grouped together in frightened silence, while his mother alone seemed serene. In her hands she held a letter.

"Read this," she said and handed the stiffly folded missive to him. "It hath but arrived from Fredericksburg. The last ship brought it. It is from Brother Joseph."

With a chill of foreboding George took the letter. It was dated May 19th, 1746, and ran as follows:

"I understand that you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son George to sea. I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject; for they will press him from ship to ship, where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog. As to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are so many gaping for it here who have interest, and he has none. And if he should get to be master of a Virginia ship (which is very difficult to do), a planter who has three or four hundred acres of land, and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably, and have his family in better bread than such a master of a ship can. . . .

"He must not be too hasty to be rich, but go on gently and with patience as things will naturally go. This method, without aiming to be a fine gentleman before his time, will carry him

more comfortably and surely through the world than going to sea, unless it be a great chance indeed. I pray God to keep you and yours.

"Your loving brother,
"JOSEPH BALL."

George was dumb with misery. It was such a letter as no mother could read, and consent thereafter that her beloved son should go to sea to be "cut and slashed and treated like a dog." And Mrs. Washington believed implicitly in his wisdom. As the boy closed and folded the dismal prognostication Lawrence broke the silence.

"Will you pardon me, madam, if I say that I do not believe that your brother understands this matter. It is now too late to take notice of it as George's belongings are already aboard the *Drake*. He must go now."

"He shall not," cried Mrs. Washington passionately. "George, I forbid it. You cannot go. I am your natural guardian, and I forbid it. Go at once, and take off that uniform. Never let me see you in it again."

It was a very trying moment. George was unable to speak, and Lawrence was pale with anger. As her son made no move to obey her his mother cried out in incredulous wonder, for never before had there been the least rebellion to her authority on his part.

"Are you going to disobey me, my son?"

"I must, mother," said George quietly. "My honor is involved. Lawrence and I both have given our word."

But at this the dignified, imperious, silent woman burst into such a passion of weeping that he was terrified. Never, even at his father's death, had she been so overcome.

"I cannot, I cannot let you go, George. You will break

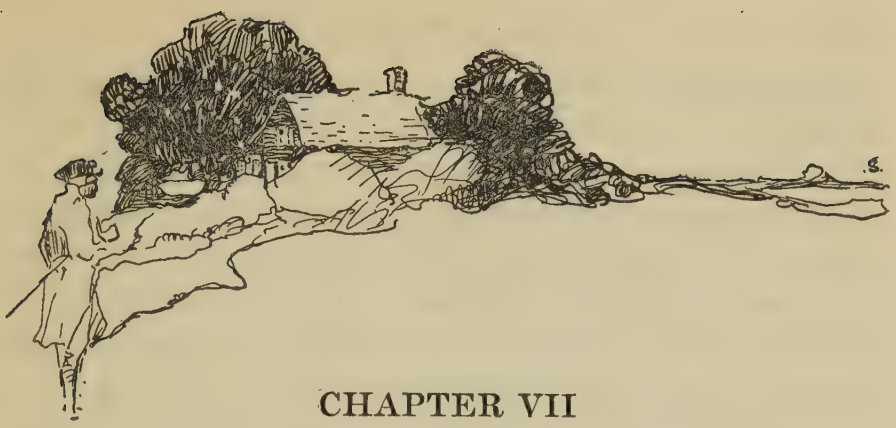
my heart if you go," she sobbed. Then, weeping, intreating, commanding, she clung to him, her first-born, convulsively.

George cast a glance of anguish at Lawrence, and then said in a choking voice:

"Do not cry any more, mother. I will obey you. I will stay."

George Washington was never greater than at this moment. It is no light thing to give up all hope of a great future spreading out before one at the request of another, even though that other be one's own mother. He yielded to her wish though it nearly broke his heart. When she would have clasped him to her, he put her gently aside, burst into tears, and rushed from the room. And no one saw him again that day.

God moves in a mysterious way, and sometimes what seem to be great calamities are in reality blessings in disguise. A place was being reserved for George among great patriots and heroes. Destiny would permit nothing to interfere with these honors.



CHAPTER VII

A Journey Over the Mountains

So George went back to school, and, by the advice of his friends, devoted his time to the study of surveying, as it was almost the only immediately gainful pursuit open to a young Virginian.

It was at this time that he became the friend of Lord Fairfax, an eccentric old gentleman recently returned to Virginia to look after his limitless possessions beyond the Blue Ridge, and was given the pleasant task of surveying his great domains.

The journey was to begin on the eleventh of March, so George left Pine Grove on the ninth of the month that he might have a short visit with Lawrence before setting out. It was a sad parting. The mother could not but think of the wild country into which he was going with its wild beasts and still wilder inhabitants, and she was fearful and afraid. Betty too was tearful, and the boys, though they strove to bear the separation like the manly lads they were, still could not keep their lips from twitching and the tears from their eyes.

It was over at length, and George rode away, looking back often to wave his hand to the little group that watched his departure.

On the morning of the eleventh George William Fairfax

rode to Mount Vernon from Belvoir, and bidding Lawrence and his wife good-bye the two youths set forth toward the distant mountains all hazy blue in the March sunshine. George William was about seven years older than George Washington, and was the eldest son of William Fairfax, and therefore Lawrence's wife's oldest brother. He had been educated in England, after the custom of well-to-do Virginians, and soon proved himself to be a delightful companion.

When they reached Alexandria George stopped long enough to purchase a blank book.

"It is for a journal," he explained to his friend. "You see it is the first time that I have ever been any distance from home, and I want to write down everything we do so that the family can see it." With this he wrote on the fly leaf:

"A Journal of my Journey over the Mountains, began Fryday ye 11th of March 1748."[1]

Thereafter, at the end of each day, he carefully noted down its happenings, reserving a portion of the pages for tabulating the surveys, his notes and letters.

It was a mild March day, and the country was most beautiful in the tender greenness of early spring. Already trees were bursting into bud and grass was sprouting in sunny spots in the valleys. Often the young travellers reined in their horses to view the unfolding landscape before them.

It rolled away in soft gradations of field and forest till it rose in the west to the snow-covered peaks of the Blue Ridge, whence melting snows rolled down in torrents which swelled the watercourses, rendering them almost impassable. But not even the possible danger of fording them, which this condition suggested, could daunt their spirits.

[1] Library of the Department of State, Washington.

George William had been in England, and had travelled in other countries, but George Washington had not, and the latter's heart beat with eager earnestness as he rode forward. Soon he would see for himself the great western country which stretched beyond the mountains, the horizon of his world till now. He had heard much of it from traders and trappers; at last he was to behold it for himself.

They rode forty miles that day, and on the next were joined by Mr. James Genn, an authorized surveyor, with his four helpers: Mr. George Ashby and Mr. Richard Taylor, Chairmen; Mr. Robert Ashby, Marker; and Mr. William Lindsay, Pilot. This addition, with the several pack horses belonging to the party, made quite a procession, and caused the young men to ride more slowly; at which inwardly they chafed as they were eager to get into the wilderness.

The adventurers commenced their surveys in the lower part of the valley, some distance above the junction of the Shenandoah with the Potomac, and worked their way up the valley of the former river.

The days passed rapidly. They went through storms of wind and rain; climbed hills and mountains, traversed valleys, plunged through swamps, swam swollen streams, and lay out all night, wet, weary, and once, when their provisions gave out, went hungry a whole day.

On the tenth of April, the surveys being completed, George and young Fairfax bade farewell to the South Branch, and started for home.

Three days later they reached Mount Vernon, and George William went on to Belvoir, while George Washington, tired but happy, remained with his brother.

CHAPTER VIII

The Young Surveyor

LORD FAIRFAX declared himself to be well satisfied with the work of the young men. He read George's Diary over several times, examined his record of the surveys taken, and never seemed to have done questioning him regarding his impressions of the beautiful valley. The old nobleman was a keen judge of human nature, and he knew that his young friend possessed strong and acute natural powers of observation. He knew that his mind was, for his years, unusually matured and well stored with practical knowledge; therefore he had great confidence in his judgment. So well pleased was he with George's report that he immediately determined to make his permanent home in the valley. Shortly thereafter he moved beyond the Blue Ridge, enlarged the hunting lodge already built, and laid out a manor of ten thousand acres, to which he gave the name of Greenway Court, planning to erect a noble castle in the future. It may be said in passing that this mansion was never built.

George, in the meantime, practiced his profession in the immediate vicinity of his home and Mount Vernon, but found himself longing to return to the wilderness. Accordingly, in

Whatever He Did He Did Well—So It Followed That His Surveys Were the Best That Could Be Made

the ensuing summer, in company with Lawrence and Lord Fairfax, who was at this time at Belvoir, he went to Williamsburg where he presented himself in the regular order of the civil service of the day before the President and Master of William and Mary College for examination to be a public surveyor. They appointed him to be surveyor of Culpeper County, which was his first commission in the service of his country. This conferred authority on his surveys, and provided him with regular work. Lawrence was as pleased as was George with the result, for the boy had earned the appointment, and journeyed with him to Culpeper County Court House to present the commission.

And now began a life of danger, hardship, and privation in the wilderness. With only his helpers George prosecuted his work with diligence, traversing the wild lands between the Potomac and Rappahannock. So accurate and skillful was his work that he won more than a local distinction. Whatever he did, he did well, and in lasting fashion; so it followed that his surveys were the best that could be made which is attested to by the fact that through all the years they have stood unquestioned.

It was a rough life and a lonely one.

It was a period of preparation, though he knew it not. He regarded his calling as a means of support, as a method of making his own way independent of his mother or brother. It was the wise choice of a manly young fellow, yet it proved a many-sided education.

He learned to know the frontiersmen, and wore their dress of hunting shirt, fringed leggins, and moccasins while in the woods. He shared their cabins that reeked of corn pone and bacon, and the odor of pelts, and often slept on their shake-

downs. A mutual esteem and liking, founded upon respect for each other, sprang up between the intrepid youth and the trappers and pioneers that was of great value to him in after life.

He saw the Indians also in their native haunts, and learned to know their character: their treachery and cruelty, and other traits that were not so bad. He learned their method of warfare and how to meet it. Above all he learned how to conciliate the red men.

The monotony of his life was varied by frequent visits to Greenway Court, where a warm welcome always awaited him. The earl was very fond of his young protégé, and his cultivated mind, social qualities, and perfect knowledge of the world were of great benefit to George in refining his manners and improving his mind. At Greenway Court too he had a chance at reading, for his lordship had a well-selected library, and when the weather was too bad for field sports he read Addison's *Spectator* and the "History of England."

And so the days glided into weeks, and the weeks passed into months, and the months into years until two had gone by; and it was January, 1751. It had become too cold for surveying in the mountains, so George gathered up his instruments, and repaired to Greenway Court to bide until the weather would permit further use of chain and quadrant.

To George's surprise his lordship was entertaining a merry party from the tidewater region. George William Fairfax had recently married Miss Sallie Cary, and had brought his bride, her lovely sister, Miss Mary, and several friends to pay a visit to his cousin. George's advent was hailed with delight, and the youth found himself in the midst of much merrymaking which came as a welcome diversion after weeks of strenuous

toil. Fox hunting, dancing, dinings followed, and George, who had all a Virginian's weakness for a pretty face, was much taken with Miss Mary Cary, and found his susceptible heart wavering in its allegiance to his "Lowland Beauty," Miss Bland. In the midst of this gayety there came a letter from Lawrence.

"Dear George," he wrote, "come to me at once. I need you."

"What is it, George?" asked the earl as he saw that his young friend looked disturbed. "No bad news, I hope."

"I don't know, sir," answered George. "Lawrence wishes me to come to him at once. There must be something amiss else he would not write in such a manner. I must leave immediately, if you will pardon such an abrupt departure."

"Certainly, my boy. I will order your horse for you. I hope that you will find that the matter is not serious. Present my compliments to your brother, and tell him that I should like a visit from him soon."

"I will do so, my lord," answered George.

Hastily making his adieus to the rest of the party he mounted his horse, and rode to Mount Vernon with all speed. It was three o'clock in the afternoon of the third day that he rode up to the porch of the mansion, and dismounted. The family were at dinner, and George gave a sigh of relief as he took his accustomed place among them. Seemingly everything was as usual, though Anne was pale and inclined to be thoughtful. After the meal Lawrence led him to his own room.

Drawing George to the window which looked out upon the river, he began to talk of things pertaining to the plantation, the affairs of the Colony, for he was a member of the House of Burgesses, and other matters indifferent while George waited

patiently for the thing of moment to be imparted. He saw that Lawrence was studying him intently. The elder brother smiled presently, the sunny smile of sweetness that had always warmed George's heart.

"George," he said suddenly, "three years ago when you went across the Blue Ridge you were a boy. Now you are a man, and yet you will not be nineteen until next month."

"One must be a man to live there, Lawrence."

"Yes; I know." Again the elder brother smiled with affectionate pride as his glance swept the stately young figure before him.

George's face was browned by suns and storms; his figure had gained breadth in proportion to its height; and his hand as it lay upon the window-sill was large and massive. Lawrence laid his own upon it, and sighed. George's glance followed his brother's, and so great was the contrast between the two—so slender, bloodless, all but transparent were the delicate fingers of the elder, that he was startled. Abruptly he laid his hands upon Lawrence's shoulders, turned him toward the window, and gazed anxiously into his face.

It had changed indeed since last they met. The brilliant red that had always dyed his cheeks was still there, but the white was waxen; the lips were pale, the temples shrunken, the features sharpened, and the eyes glittered with unnatural fire. He looked aged, worn, yet he was but thirty-three.

The truth was too palpable. George groaned, dropped his hands, and turned away. Lawrence spoke calmly:

"You have made a reputation for yourself, George. You are spoken of as a young man of diligence, energy, ability, and integrity. You are very successful, and the prospects are bright for you to become more so. And yet, will you give it up,

and stay here with me? As you see, I am not well; and I need you."

"I will give up anything to be of help to you, Lawrence," exclaimed George earnestly. "I shall be glad to do it. Tell me what you want me to do."

"True heart! I knew that I could depend on you."

"What is it that you would have me do, Lawrence?" asked George with emotion.

"I want you to take my place in all things so far as it is possible. Here on the plantation, and as Adjutant."

"As Adjutant?" echoed the younger, amazed.

"Yes; and to prepare you for your duties I have asked Jacob Van Braam and Adjutant Muse, my old comrades, to stay with us for a time to instruct you in swordsmanship and military tactics. You were born for military service, and you will like the position."

"Like it? Why, this is not service for you! It is what I always wanted to do!"

"I know; but it will serve me too, George, as I am unable to perform the duty. And the French are becoming active on the frontier."

George looked thoughtful.

"I have heard something of it, Lawrence. 'Tis talked in the wilderness that our people are being pushed back from the frontier toward the mountains. If all is true there will be trouble aplenty."

"Yes; and from the Ohio comes the news that many of the Indians who were friendly to us but a short time ago will now neither trade with us nor let other tribes do so. We believe they are in alliance with the French."

"That makes a bad outlook for your Company, Lawrence."

"And for America as well, George. The whole western frontier of the Colonies is in danger of being wrested from us if we do not rally to its defence. There is no doubt in my mind but that a war with the French is imminent. The efforts of the Ohio Company have precipitated affairs."

Two years previous to this, in 1749, there had been formed an enterprise for the colonization of the region west of the Alleghany Mountains, round the head waters of the Ohio River. Both Lawrence and Augustine Washington were among the originators of the company which comprised many Virginia gentlemen of wealth and influence. They had obtained a charter from each one of the provinicial governments that had any connection with, or claims upon, those regions. In return for the grant of a large tract of land from the Crown the Ohio Company had engaged by its charter to place, within the term of four years, one hundred and fifty families of emigrants on this territory. To prepare to do this was, therefore, its first object, but to this the French made objection, claiming that the land belonged to France. To establish their claims they had built forts, buried leaden plates in the ground, and nailed them to trees, and prepared for hostile contingencies. The Colonies likewise began warlike preparations, and it was fast becoming evident that the claims of the two countries could only be settled by resource to the sword.

The war spirit was specially manifested in Virginia. "The province was divided into military districts, each having an adjutant-general, with the rank of major, and the pay of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, whose duty was to attend to the organization and equipment of the militia."

Lawrence had been appointed adjutant-general of his district, but he had resigned, because of his failing health, and had

succeeded in having his brother George appointed to the position.

As Lawrence told all this to George a violent fit of coughing interrupted him, and he leaned on his brother's shoulder. George supported him tenderly. He would have been delighted with the news of the appointment had it not been for Lawrence's condition.

The Cartagena Campaign had undermined Lawrence's constitution, and sown the seeds of consumption. The malady was now developing with alarming rapidity. He had been failing for some time, but he was a man of untiring industry, and had devoted himself to his various interests in spite of ill health. He was rapidly becoming wealthy and a recognized leader in the chief enterprises of the day in the Colony. After the death of Mr. Thomas Lee he became the President of the Ohio Company, and was so enlightened that he insisted that the Dutch emigrants with which it was hoped the Ohio region would be settled, being dissenters, should not pay tithes to the Established Church of Virginia, but should only support their own ministers. While a member of the House of Burgesses he was influential in having charters granted for the towns of Alexandria and of Colchester in Fairfax County, and pushed forward the development of those two places by every means in his power. He was in a fair way to become a distinguished man; a brother to be proud of, and George was filled with sadness at the thought of his decline.

There was not much time given him for grief, however. Soon after his interview with Lawrence, Adjutant Muse and Jacob Van Braam arrived at Mount Vernon, and work was at once begun to mould George into a soldier. Both Muse and Van Braam had been in the West India Campaign with

Lawrence, and they took great interest in his brother. Muse undertook his instruction in the art of war, lending him treatises on military tactics, putting him through the manual exercises, and giving him some idea of evolutions in the field. Van Braam was a burly Dutchman by birth, who had been in the British army, but was now out of the service, and eked out a slender purse by giving instruction in fencing to the young men of Virginia.

Experienced officers to drill the untrained and undisciplined militia were scare, but George threw himself into his work so thoroughly that he was soon able to render a good account of himself on training days. His natural dignity commanded a ready tribute of respect, and soon his ability as an officer became apparent. He rode through his district, doing his best to ascertain how many men could be counted on, and tried to stiffen the lax discipline of the county militia.

As soon as the weather permitted Lawrence went to the Warm Springs of the Colony in an effort at regaining his health. Anne went with him, taking their infant daughter, who was also ailing, with her. George was left in charge of the plantation, and in the intervals of tactics, fencing, and drilling the militia attended to the ploughing and planting. So spring and summer passed busily. The ironweed was purpling under the August sun, and whippoorwills were calling in the fragrance of the midsummer nights when Lawrence returned with his wife.

He had not benefited as much as he had hoped to by the sojourn at the Springs, and now his physician declared that an ocean voyage was advisable, and that a winter spent in a warm climate was the only thing left for him. Anne sought George tearfully.

"You must go with him, George," she said. "Little Sarah is too delicate to venture to take her from home, and Lawrence must not go alone among strangers."

"And you, Anne? Can you manage here?" asked he.

"Yes; I think so. Austin will help me, and George William will come over with Sallie to stay, if I wish it."

"Then if Lawrence wishes it I will gladly go with him," said George.

Lawrence did wish it, and a voyage to Barbadoes was decided upon. On the twenty-eighth of September, therefore, Lawrence and George took passage on the schooner *Fredericksburg,* Captian Robinson, and sailed down the Potomac for the Barbadoes.

CHAPTER IX

A Mission to the Ohio

IN spite of the journey to the tropics there was no improvement in Lawrence's health. George during their stay contracted the smallpox but recovered although his face was slightly pitted from the disease. Lawrence did not become better and George returned to Virginia with the sorrowful news. Lawrence's wife immediately prepared to join her husband, but before she departed he came home, and after a few months of suffering passed away on the twenty-sixth of July, 1752. "He was a noble-spirited, pure-minded, accomplished gentleman; honored by the public and loved by his friends."

Lawrence's death was a bitter grief to George. It seemed to him that he could not go on without the wise counsel, the unfailing sympathy, and the affection of his loved brother. To offset the great loneliness that fell upon him he threw himself into the administration of affairs with all his might, taking up his permanent abode at Mount Vernon that he might the better look after the interests of Anne and his little niece.

He also pursued his military duties, performing them with such zeal that he became recognized as a well-educated officer. During this year of 1752 Governor Dinwiddie divided the

Colony into four districts, reappointing George adjutant-general of the northern division. Major Washington traversed the counties embraced in his division statedly, and succeeded in effecting such discipline in the militia that they were ready for warlike operations.

And so for a year life went on at Mount Vernon as nearly as it might be in its accustomed groove, kept so by Anne's wishes; at Pine Grove somewhat merrier than of yore because of Betty's young ladyship, and the increasing years of the younger brothers; and with George in grave responsibilities. In the early part of 1753 Little Sarah died, and by the will the estate fell to him. It afforded him little pleasure, however, to profit by the death of these dear ones, and until Anne's marriage to Mr. George Lee of Westmoreland, which took place the following year, he managed the plantation entirely under her direction as though he were but her agent.

Meantime the French aggressions had continued. Troops crossed the northern lakes on their way to the Ohio; others ascended the Mississippi from New Orleans. Extensive preparations were being made to establish posts and erect fortifications on the western border which were to hem in the English settlements. Boldly they avowed their purpose to adopt all necessary measures to possess themselves of the whole extent of territory from Louisiana to Canada. Governor Dinwiddie sent a special commissioner to remonstrate against these encroachments, but Captain William Trent, the envoy, became alarmed at the troublous condition of things on the frontier, lost heart, and returned home without accomplishing his mission.

Matters were in this condition when George received a message from the Governor, requiring his immediate presence at

Williamsburg. It was October, and affairs of the plantation would not suffer by being turned over to an overseer, so Major Washington set off at once, wondering greatly what the summons portended.

In the afternoon of the following day he rode into the Capital, a modest hamlet consisting of detached houses, which was now beginning to take on a festive appearance because of the opening of the House of Burgesses. Gloucester Street, the main thoroughfare, was thronged with coaches-and-four containing the families of the great planters; men and youths on spirited horses; gentlemen of the Council; naval men from the ships lying beyond Yorktown, and students from the William and Mary College which stood at one end of the street facing the Old Capitol at the other.

The young man alighted at the Raleigh Tavern on Gloucester Street, and, securing a room, made himself presentable before waiting upon the Governor. Governor Dinwiddie was in conference with some gentlemen of his Council at the palace, notwithstanding which fact George was admitted immediately. He had met with all of the gentlemen present so, after the formal greetings, the Governor began at once on the business in hand.

"Major Washington," he said, "you are aware of the condition of things on the frontier, and are acquainted with the trials of the Ohio Company to place settlers there. It is needless to recount the aggressions of the French, for you are familiar with them. Now, sir, I am in need of an envoy to send to the French Commandant with a protest against trespassing upon the English wilderness. You, sir, have been pointed out as eminently fitted for the task."

"I, Your Excellency?" ejaculated Washington in surprise.

"Yes; it requires physical strength and moral energy, a courage to cope with savages, and a sagacity to negotiate with white men. We believe that you possess all these qualifications; therefore, I and my Council have chosen you for the expedition. Will you go?"

"When do you wish me to start, sir?" asked the young man quietly.

Robert Dinwiddie burst into a hearty laugh.

"Hoot, mon," he exclaimed relapsing into Scotch, "gie me time to make out the credentials. 'Twas said that ye were a braw laddie. Now, Major, these are your instructions: you are to proceed first to Logstown, and talk there with the sachems to find out how they are disposed toward us, and to request an escort to the headquarters of the French commander. To that officer you are to deliver your credentials and my letter, demanding an answer in the name of His Britannic Majesty, but do not wait for it beyond a week. You are, moreover, to acquaint yourself with the numbers and force of the French stationed on the Ohio and its vicinity; their capability of being reinforced from Canada; the forts they have erected; where situated, how garrisoned; the object of their advancing into those parts, and how they are likely to be supported.[1] How much time shall you require to get ready to go?"

"I shall be ready when the credentials are, sir," George told him.

"And those you shall have to-morrow morning, Major," said the Governor laughing again. And then as he bade the young man Godspeed, he added facetiously: "Ye're a braw lad, and gin ye play your cards weel, my boy, ye shall have nae cause to rue your bargain."

[1] Journal of Washington.

The credentials were sent Washington the next day, and in the same hour he set off for Fredericksburg, arriving there the next day. Here he engaged his old fencing master, Jacob Van Braam, to be his French interpreter, and together they proceeded to Alexandria where they provided an outfit of provisions, blankets, and guns for the journey. The horses, tents, and other travelling equipments Washington left until he reached Winchester, and then pushed on rapidly to Wills Creek[1] where he arrived on the 14th of November.

He met a Mr. Christopher Gist here, an intrepid pioneer, and the boldest of Virginia frontiersmen, whom he engaged to accompany and pilot him in the expedition. He secured also the services of one John Davidson as an Indian interpreter, and of four frontiersmen, two of whom were Indian traders. With this little party he set forth on the 15th of November through the trackless wilderness for Logstown, the Indian village.

Almost from the start they experienced inclement weather, either rain or snow falling daily. In the mountains the snowfall was already heavy, and the rivers were so swollen that the horses had to swim them. At the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela Washington found an Indian trader, John Frazier, who had been driven out of the Indian town of Venango by the French. He borrowed two canoes from him, and sent all the baggage down the Monongahela under care of two of the men with orders to meet him at the fork where that river, with the Alleghany River, joined the Ohio. He himself followed by land with the rest of the party.

Reaching the place of meeting before the canoes, Washington considered it attentively, settling in his mind that it was an

[1] Now Cumberland.

excellent place for a fort, and his judgment was later confirmed by the French who built Fort Duquesne there.

In this neighborhood lived Shingiss, the chief sachem of the Delawares, and the young man visited him to invite him to attend the Council at Logstown which invitation the chief accepted. As he was returning from the visit with Gist and Davidson who had accompanied him, Mr. Gist said:

" Major, you must be prepared to string your belt of wampum with fine words. Last year when I was surveying lands for the Ohio Company in this country an old Delaware sachem asked me a puzzling question. ' The French,' said he, ' claim all the land on one side of the Ohio, the English claim all the land on the other side—now where does the Indians' land lie? "

Washington looked thoughtful. " There is a great deal of matter in that question," he remarked.

" Don't let that part of it worry you, Major," exclaimed Gist quickly. " They are nothing but human vermin, and should be extirpated." The view of all frontiersmen.

As a matter of fact, the savage was entirely right. The claims of both French and English were absurd. The party arrived at Logstown [1] between sunsetting and dark on the 24th of November. Tanacharisson, the Half-king, was absent, but Washington succeeded in having him sent for, and he arrived the next morning, eager to hold a Council. Tanacharisson was a Seneca chief of great note, being head sachem of the mixed tribes which had emigrated to the Ohio and its branches. He was generally surnamed the Half-king, being subordinate to the Iroquois confederacy. He had met with the French officers recently, and had been treated contemptuously by them, and was angry at the French claims. He told Washington of two

[1] Near the site of the present Pittsburg.

forts that the French had, one at French Creek and the other on Lake Erie, and gave him other information of value. At Washington's suggestion he convened the Council in the Long House in the afternoon, and after the preliminary formalities the young major addressed the sachems as follows:

"Brothers, I have called you together in council, by order of your brother the Governor of Virginia, to acquaint you, that I am sent with all possible despatch, to visit and deliver a letter to the French Commandant of very great importance to your brothers the English, and I dare say to you, their friends and allies.

"I was desired, brothers, by your brother the Governor to call upon you, the sachems of the nations, to inform you of it, and to ask for your advice and assistance to proceed the nearest and best road to the French. You see, brothers, I have gotten thus far on my journey.

"His Honor likewise desired me to apply to you for some of your young men to conduct and provide provisions for us on our way; and be a safeguard against those French Indians who have taken up the hatchet against us. I have spoken thus particularly to you, brothers, because his Honor our Governor treats you as good friends and allies, and holds you in great esteem. To confirm what I have said I give you this string of wampum."[1]

As was etiquette among the Indians the sachems sat in silence after he had made an end of speaking to consider the discourse. Then the Half-king got up and spoke:

"Now, my brother, in regard to what my brother the Governor has desired of me I return you this answer.

"I rely upon you as a brother ought to do, as you say we

[1] Journal of Washington of his Mission to the Ohio.

THE SACHEMS SAT IN SILENCE AFTER HE HAD MADE AN END OF SPEAKING TO CONSIDER THE DISCOURSE. THEN THE HALF-KING GOT UP AND SPOKE

are brothers, and one people. We shall put heart in hand and speak to our fathers, the French, concerning the speech they made to me; and you may depend that we shall endeavor to be your guard.

" Brother, as you have asked my advice, I hope you will be ruled by it, and stay until I can provide a company to go with you. The French speech-belt is not here; I have to go for it to my hunting lodge. Likewise, the people whom I have ordered in are not yet come, and cannot until the third night from this; until which time, brother, I must beg you to stay."

Washington chafed at the delay, but he soon found that he must accede to their demands, or offend them. Therefore, he consented at length to remain the time specified.

During the interval of waiting four French deserters came to the village on their way to Philadelphia, and he drew from them all the knowledge they possessed of New Orleans and the military expeditions from that region. Finally, after much speech-making, the chiefs determined that but three of the sachems should accompany the mission, as a greater number might awaken the suspicions of the French. Accordingly, on the 30th of November, the major set out for the French post, with his usual party increased by the presence of the Half-king, Jeskakake, an old Shannoach sachem, another chief named White Thunder, and one Indian hunter.

The Half-king had said that it would take five or six sleeps (days) to reach Venango, the first French outpost, and Washington found the statement correct. It was but seventy miles from Logstown, yet such was the inclemency of the weather and the difficulty of travelling the place was not reached until December 4th. There was no fort here, merely a large log house, out of which the French had driven John Frazier, the

Indian trader, with a clearing around it. The French colors flew above it, by which the young man knew that the commander dwelt therein. Taking with him Van Braam and Gist he rode up to the door and knocked. Three French officers came to the door, and inquired civilly what he wished.

"I would like, gentlemen, to find the Commandant of the French," Washington told them.

"I, sir, am in command of the Ohio," answered the oldest officer, a gray-haired man of sixty or more years. "I am Captain Joncaire."

"And I am Major Washington of Virginia," answered Washington with a low bow. "I am come to bring a letter from our Governor to the Commandant of the French. Therefore, I will deliver it to you."

But Captain Joncaire shook his head.

"Nay," he said. "Our general officer is at the next post. It is to him that you must give the letter, for he is the one who must write the answer. You cannot reach there to-night; therefore, I pray you to bring your party, and sup with me."

"It will give me pleasure, sir, to accept your hospitality," replied Washington courteously.

With this he went back to his men, and told them of the invitation. Prudently keeping his Indian chiefs in the background, he joined the captain at headquarters for supper, observing the officer curiously the while.

For Captain Joncaire was the veteran intriguer of the frontier, and had a strange history. "He had been taken prisoner when quite young by the Iroquois, and adopted into one of their tribes. This was the making of his fortune. He had grown up among them, acquired their language, adapted himself to their habits, and was considered by them as one of them-

selves. On returning to civilized life he became a prime instrument in the hands of the Canadian government for managing and cajoling the Indians. . . . Years and years had elapsed; he had grown gray in Indian diplomacy, and was now sent once more to maintain French sovereignty over the valley of the Ohio." [1]

The wine flowed plentifully at supper, and the Frenchmen, who had heretofore been on their guard, began to brag and to reveal their sentiments freely. They told that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and swore that they would do it; for though they knew that the English could raise twice as many men as they, yet they, the English, were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking. This and much more to the purpose did they tell. Washington, who had retained his sobriety, well knowing that when the " wine is in, the wit is out," carefully noted all with the help of Van Braam. The latter, being somewhat conversant with French, collected a vast amount of information concerning the French forces; how and where they were distributed, and their means and mode of obtaining supplies.

It rained excessively the next day which prevented Washington from continuing his journey, and now he began to experience trouble. For, as soon as the Indian chiefs appeared from the camp where he had left them, Joncaire fell upon their necks, making much of them, and chiding them for not coming at once to see him. He succeeded in making them drunk, loaded them with gifts, and refused absolutely to receive the speech-belts which the Half-king tried to give him. Finally, Washington got off carrying his chiefs with him, and after four days of weary travel through snow and rain, over marshy

[1] "Life of Washington," by Washington Irving.

savannas he reached French Creek where Fort Le Bœuf was situated, fifteen miles from Lake Erie. Captain Joncaire had sent with the party a man by the name of La Force and three soldiers. La Force was active, daring and mischief-making, and was at the bottom of many of the young major's perplexities.

Fort Le Bœuf was well adapted for defence. The bastions, made of palisades twelve feet high, were picketed, and pierced for cannon and small arms. Within were a guard-house, chapel, and other buildings, while on the outside were stables, a smith's forge, and log houses covered with bark for the soldiers.

Presenting himself at the gate of the fort with Van Braam, his interpreter, Washington was met by the officer second in command who desired to know his pleasure.

" I wish," the young man told him, " to see the Commandant. I have a letter for him from the Governor of Virginia."

With this the officer bowed low, and conducted him at once to his superior. He was the Chevalier de St. Pierre, an old nobleman with silvery hair, who met the envoy with low bows and profuse courtesy. Under the courtier, however, was the soldier. He had but recently taken command, having arrived but seven days previous to the Virginian's coming. Now, as Washington announced his errand through Van Braam, offered his credentials, and produced the letter from Governor Dinwiddie, expecting to proceed immediately to business, he politely desired him to retain the documents until the arrival of his predecessor, Captain Reparti, who was hourly expected from the next post.

In the afternoon the captain came, and George again offered his letter and other papers. This time they were received, and

retiring to a private room with the chevalier, the captain, who had some knowledge of English, translated them. After which Washington and Van Braam were sent for, and the latter was asked to translate them also. Two days were consumed in councils by the chevalier and his officers over the letter and the necessary reply.

Washington, meantime, occupied himself in taking notes of the plan, dimensions, and strength of the fort, and of everything about it, giving his people orders to take observations also, and to make an exact count of the number of canoes made ready for use in the spring. The weather continued to be very stormy, with much snow, and his horses were daily becoming weaker, so he sent them down unladen to Venango, to await his return by water. And now he became aware that intrigues were going on to induce the Indian chiefs to abandon him, and to renounce all friendship with the English. There were many presents made to them, and the astute chevalier cautiously evaded receiving the speech-belts which the Half-king tried to give back to him; for this would shake off their dependence on the French. Rum was supplied the savages in quantities, and one pretext after another was used to detain them until after Washington's departure. On the evening of the 14th of December the chevalier delivered to the young envoy his sealed reply to Governor Dinwiddie. From the tenor of previous conversations held with him Washington knew that the reply to the protest was:

"I am here by the orders of my General, and I entreat you, sir, not to doubt one moment, but that I am determined to conform myself to them with all the exactness and resolution that can be expected from the best officer."

His mission was now accomplished, and he prepared to leave

the next day by water for Venango, but the sachems refused to depart. By dint of much questioning Washington found that a present of guns had been promised them by the French, and they would not go until they had received them. At this he went to the Commandant and remonstrated with him, declaring that he was hindering him from proceeding on his journey, as the chiefs were part of his party. The chevalier professed to be ignorant of the cause of the Indians' attitude, and promised to further his departure by every means in his power. To this end he furnished the young man with provisions for his journey, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though George knew that every artifice that could be invented was being used to set the Indians at variance with him. It was a period of intense anxiety. At length, however, he succeeded in getting off and carrying his savage allies with him. As a bend in the river shut the fort from view the young man uttered a sigh of relief.

"Mr. Gist," he said, "I never spent a more anxious time in my life."

"There was need for anxiety, Major," answered Gist gravely. "And to my way of thinking we are not out of the woods yet. There's mischief brewing among the Frenchies sure as preaching. It needs only warm weather to set the pot boiling. And as for you, sir, the quicker you get back to Williamsburg the better."

"That is my own opinion, Mr. Gist," answered the young man.

The passage down-stream was tedious and fatiguing in the extreme. Every mile presented new dangers and only the greatest skill saved them time and again. Several times the canoes were staved against the rocks; and many times all

hands were obliged to get out and remain in the water an hour or more getting over the shoals. At one place the ice had lodged, and made it impassable by water. They were obliged, therefore, to carry the canoes across the neck of land, a quarter of a mile over. Venango was not reached until the 22nd of December, where they found the horses and the rest of the party waiting them.

And now another struggle for the savages followed with the wily Captain Joncaire, in which the sachems decided to remain at Venango. The Half-king, however, assured Washington that he need have no fear as he knew the French too well to be engaged in their favor. As White Thunder had hurt himself and was so ill that he was unable to walk Washington was obliged most unwillingly to go on without them.

The pack-horses, laden with provisions, tents, and baggage, were now so weak and feeble that Washington doubted much their ability to perform the journey. Therefore, all but the drivers, who were obliged to ride, gave up their horses for packs. Washington now put himself in an Indian walking dress, and with Van Braam, Gist and Davidson proceeded on foot. It snowed, continually freezing; the roads became almost impassable, and the poor horses less able to travel every day. Almost in despair at the delay Washington decided to strike off through the woods the nearest way on foot that he might reach Williamsburg as soon as possible with the chevalier's letter.

Accordingly, he put Van Braam in charge of the baggage with money and directions to provide necessaries from place to place for themselves and horses, and to make the most convenient despatch in travelling. Then, taking his necessary

papers, he pulled off his clothes, put on Indian dress and match coat, and desired Mr. Gist to accompany him on foot.

"I'll go, Major, of course," Gist told him dubiously. "But do you think it wise? You are unused to walking, and it will be a terrible journey."

"I must, Mr. Gist," answered the young man earnestly. "There is no other way to reach the Governor, and he should have this report as soon as possible."

Gist said no more, but quickly fitted himself in the same manner as the major, and with packs on their backs like Indians the two set out. They travelled eighteen miles that day, and lodged that night in an Indian cabin, as Washington was much fatigued. It was very cold. All the creeks were frozen so that they could hardly get water to drink.

The next day they rose early, and got to Murdering Town on Beaver Creek. There was a party of Indians encamped here who seemed to expect them. One of them came forward quickly, and accosted Mr. Gist by his Indian name, expressing great joy at seeing him. Gist regarded him attentively, as the fellow's face looked familiar. It seemed to him that he had seen the brave at Joncaire's, but he answered him civilly enough. Whereupon the savage asked a number of questions, as to how they came to travel on foot, when they left Venango, where they parted with their horses, and when the rest of the party would be along; to all of which Gist replied with caution.[1]

As they were desirous of reaching Shannopin's Town by the most direct route, and the way lay through a trackless wilderness, Washington asked his companion if he did not deem it expedient to get one of the Indians to guide them there. Re-

[1] "Gist's Journal." Published by Mass. Hist. Soc., 3rd. series, Vol. V.

luctantly Gist consented. He did not trust any of the party and was filled with misgiving, but it seemed the best thing to do.

The Indian who had asked the questions consented with alacrity to take them there, and they set out, the savage carrying Washington's pack. After they had walked some miles George's feet grew sore and chafed, and he desired to camp, saying that he was too tired to proceed further. At this the guide demurred, and pressed them to keep on, telling them that there were Ottawa Indians in the woods and that they would scalp them if they lay out; that he would take them to his cabin where they would be safe. He added that he would carry Washington's gun if he were tired.

Washington refused this sharply; his suspicions were awakened, and the frontiersman was decidedly uneasy. At length the Indian stopped and listened. He said that he had heard the report of a gun, and that it must be from his cabin. With this he steered them more northwardly. The two men followed slowly becoming more uneasy; then the savage remarked that he heard two whoops—they were from his cabin, and that it could not be far off.

At this Washington told him firmly that they would halt when they reached the next water, but before they came to water they came to a clear meadow. A pale moon was casting its cold radiance over the landscape, and the snow on the ground increased the lightness. The Indian stopped suddenly, wheeled, and fired at Washington.

"Are you shot, Mr. Gist?" cried Washington startled. The ball had sped by him, and he feared that Gist was hit.

"No," answered Gist. "But we must get that fellow, Major."

With this both ran forward. The Indian meantime had screened himself behind a large white oak where he was reloading his gun, but they were upon him before he could finish the charge. Gist seized him by the neck, exclaiming:

"Shoot him, Major. Kill him like the dog that he is."

"No," answered Washington. "We cannot kill an unarmed man. Let's have him make a fire while we discuss what to do with him."

The Indian made the fire, seeing that he was under guard, but he did it sullenly.

"As you will not have him killed, Major," said Gist in an undertone, for Indians have keen hearing, "we must get rid of him, and travel all night. It will be difficult. Shall I manage it?"

"If you wish, Mr. Gist."

Gist strolled over to the fellow, and stood above him. "I suppose you were lost is the reason that you fired your gun," he remarked.

"I know the way to my cabin now," answered the savage. "It is at no great distance."

"Well," said the woodsman, "do you go home, and as we are much tired, we will follow your track in the morning; and here is a cake of bread for you. You must give us meat when we get there."

The savage took the bread, and set off, seeming glad to get away. Gist followed after him and listened until he had fairly gone. Then he and Washington set out, proceeded about half a mile, when they made another fire, set their compass and fixed their course, then travelled all night so as to gain a good start should there be any pursuit at daylight. Continuing on the next day they pushed forward without rest until at night-

fall they arrived at the banks of the Alleghany River, about two miles above Shannopin's Town.

They expected to find the river frozen here, but it was not, only about fifty yards from each shore while vast quantities of broken ice were driving down the middle. There was no way for getting over but on a raft, which the two set about making, with but one poor hatchet. It took all day, but they finished just after the sun had set, and launched it, propelling it with setting poles. Before they were half-way across the raft was jammed in the ice in such a manner that they expected it to sink, and they were in great peril. Washington put out his setting pole to try to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by, when the rapidity of the current of the stream threw it with so much violence against the pole, that he was jerked off the raft into ten feet of icy water. He saved himself from being swept away and drowned by catching hold of one of the logs of the raft.

In spite of all their efforts they could not get to either shore; and as they were swept near an island they quitted the raft, and made it. The cold was intense, but they were obliged to pass the night exposed to it, and Gist froze his toes and fingers. In the morning the ice cakes were so frozen together that they could cross on them which they did, and made their way to the house of John Frazier, the Indian trader.

Here they learned that a band of French Indians, the Ottawas, had massacred a whole family of whites on the banks of the Great Kanawha River.

They expected to get horses at this place, but as it would take several days to obtain them Washington paid a visit to Queen Aliquippa, who had expressed great concern that the party had passed her by without a visit on their way to the

fort. He pacified her, and secured her good graces by presents.

They were not successful in obtaining horses after all, so went on down to Gist's residence on the Monongahela, and here they separated. Washington bought a horse, and continued his homeward journey alone. On the sixth of January he passed seventeen horses loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the forks of the Ohio, and the day after some families who were going there to settle.

On the 16th of January he arrived at Williamsburg after nearly three months of as fatiguing a journey as it is possible to conceive.

CHAPTER X

His First Campaign

GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE received his youthful envoy with expressions of relief and approbation. The young man was not yet twenty-two, but he had succeeded where Captain Trent, a much older man, had failed. Through rain and snow, in midwinter, in intensely cold weather, and amid sufferings and perils that required the constant exercise of extraordinary resolution, fortitude, and endurance, the mission had been accomplished. As soon as the Governor read Washington's report he caused it to be published in Virginia, and George became the hero of the hour.

The newspapers of the other Colonies reprinted it, and the Governor sent a copy of it to London where it was republished under the auspices of the British government. For the first time England heard the name of George Washington. It was not to be the last.

The reply of Chevalier Legardeur de St. Pierre was diplomatic but it conceded nothing. It was plain that the French meant to hold the lands. In fact, it looked like war; so Governor Dinwiddie convened the House of Burgesses without delay. He also sent letters to the governors of the other Provinces

calling on them for aid, in view of the common danger. But the time was not yet ripe for a union of the Colonies in a common cause.

In spite of many differences with the Governor as to what measures ought to be pursued the House of Burgesses voted to appropriate ten thousand pounds for the defense of the Colony, and authorized the raising of a force of several hundred men to take possession of the disputed territory. Prompt action, it was felt, was necessary to anticipate French measures. The command of this force was offered to Washington.

George was at Pine Grove when Austin, who was a member of the House of Burgesses, brought the letter to him. George shook his head as he read it.

"It is too great a charge for my youth and inexperience to be intrusted with," he remarked.

"I think so too, George," agreed Austin laying his hand on his shoulder. "You have done marvellously well, but this does seem in truth too great a responsibility for so young a man. I told Mr. Richard Corbin so, but he would have it that no one was so well fitted for it as you. But the second place now? Would you like that, my brother?"

George's eyes lighted up.

"If I were thought worthy of it, Austin, I should like it above all things. I'd like to serve under a man of ability and experience, as second in command. I would try to give satisfaction."

"We know that, George," said Austin.

So he was made lieutenant-colonel, second in command under Colonel Joshua Fry, an English gentleman of some military experience and education. George at once began the tedious task of recruiting men in the midst of most irritating difficulties.

While he was so engaged a small company under Captain William Trent was sent to the Fork of the Ohio to build a fort at the place approved by Washington as suitable for one. On the 2nd of April, 1754, the young colonel with two companies, amounting to about one hundred and fifty men, left Alexandria to join him there. He was to build roads as he went so that the rest of the regiment under Colonel Fry could follow with the artillery. Captain Trent was to obtain supplies and pack-horses which were to be left for Washington at Wills' Creek, on the edge of the wilderness. When he reached the place some three weeks later there was Captain Trent, but nothing was ready which he had promised to provide.

Indian runners from the Half-king came to greet Washington almost as soon as he arrived. They also declared that the men whom Captain Trent had left at the Fork of the Ohio, busily working on the fort, had been captured by the French. Dismayed by these tidings Washington sought the captain, but Trent exclaimed angrily that there was nothing to the matter.

"Why should they be captured?" he demanded. "War has not been declared between France and England, and that would be an overt act."

"It is what we must expect, sir, at any time," answered Washington with some curtness. Trent should have been with his men, and not back here in the settlements.

Washington was eager to press forward to ascertain the truth of the news, but was unable to do so. Trent's inefficiency in providing supplies made it necessary to send back to Winchester, sixty miles distant, for baggage-wagons and other equipments, and he had to await their arrival.

However, all rumors as to the fate of the men were set at rest in a few days by the appearance of the men themselves,

under conduct of Ensign Ward, bringing with them all their working tools. The ensign, a very young man, could scarcely keep back the tears as he related what had happened.

"We were working away not thinking about the French," he said. "The fort was half finished when one day a number of batteaux and canoes appeared in the river, carrying about a thousand French and Indians. There were sixty of the batteaux and three hundred canoes. Landing, the men were drawn up, the field-pieces planted, and the officer in command, Captain Contrecœur, summoned us to surrender.

"What was I to do, sir? Captain Trent was not there, and neither was Lieutenant Frazier. In fact, I was the only officer, and the French captain had given us but an hour to reply to his summons. In my perplexity, I asked Tanacharisson, the Half-king, who happened to be visiting us that day, what to do. He advised me to go to the French, and tell the officer that I had neither rank nor power, and to ask him to wait until the return of one of my superiors. I acted on this advice, but Captain Contrecœur would not listen to me. There must be instant surrender, he said, else he would take forcible possession.

"Well, they were a thousand to our fifty; so I had to turn over the fort. The only concession that I could obtain was permission to leave with the men, and take our tools with us. I could not have done otherwise, could I? It's war, isn't it?"

"War! It is war indeed," answered Washington. "No, Ensign; there was naught else that you could do. I am sure that His Excellency and his Council will hold you excused. And now we must consider what is to be done."

Immediately sending off expresses to Governor Dinwiddie telling of the occurrence at the Fork, he then wrote to the gov-

ernors and Assemblies of Pennsylvania and Maryland asking for additions to his little band. It may be said in passing that nothing was done for him. The Assemblies were too busy quarrelling with their governors. It does seem as though when men, even though they were really intelligent, are banded together in legislative bodies they take on a stupidity that is bovine.

The young commander was perplexed what course to pursue. Should they go forward, or retreat. Ardently he wished to go on; in his dilemma he called a Council of War and stated the situation frankly to his officers.

" The enemy," said he, " will greatly outnumber us; will be provided with artillery and all the munitions of war, and within reach of constant supplies and reinforcements. There will be danger of surprise and defeat. And yet, notwithstanding all this if we show signs of apprehension, or fall back, our Indian allies may desert us. The savages love bravery and daring, and will judge us accordingly. Our own soldiers, too, may be dissatisfied unless we show a brave front. And there are the settlers also to be considered."

After deliberation it was determined to proceed to the Ohio Company's stone house at the mouth of Red Stone Creek, which was thirty-seven miles from the captured fort, to fortify themselves there, and to wait for reinforcements; but, in the event of their not reaching them in time, to be prepared for a retreat.

Trent's men, being volunteers, preferred to return to Winchester, and as they were refractory, Washington let them go. On the 29th of April he set out from Wills' Creek with one hundred and sixty men, breaking a road as they went. The wilderness was so dense that with the labor of all hands they

could not accomplish more than four miles a day. After infinite toil through swamps and forests, and over rugged mountains the detachment arrived at the Youghiogheny River, a branch of the Monongahela, which Washington explored and found to be unnavigable. It, therefore, had to be bridged.

All the way Washington's little force was met by traders who were retreating to the settlements, being driven out by the French. Their accounts of the enemy were gloomy in the extreme, and disheartening to the soldiers.

On May the 24th some friendly Indians arrived from the Half-king to tell him that the French were rapidly marching toward him, resolved on an encounter. Upon this intelligence Washington hurried to a spot in a glade, near a creek, amid gently rising hills, and began to clear the bushes out of the meadows, and to make an entrenchment. The glade was known as " The Great Meadows."

" 'Tis a most charming field for an encounter, Mr. Van Braam," he remarked to the old soldier who was serving under him as captain.

Van Braam smiled.

" I wonder if, after a dozen campaigns, you will still be of the same opinion regarding war, Colonel," he said musingly.

" I hope that I shall learn from experience," observed the young man. " There is much that I would know."

" Well, if it is to be learned you'll know it," comforted the trooper.

A few days later Mr. Gist, Washington's companion on his mission to the Ohio, arrived from his trading post thirteen miles distant.

" Have you seen anything of La Force? " he asked of Wash-

ington scarcely waiting to greet him. "He visited me yesterday with a detachment of fifty men, and asked many questions about you. I traced him and his men by their footsteps to within five miles of this camp, when I lost the trail. La Force is up to his old tricks. Have you seen anything of him?"

"No, Mr. Gist; but if he is in this vicinity I shall soon know it."

With this Washington sent out seventy-five men on a hunt of the roving party, but after a time they returned, reporting that they could find no trace of the French. About nine o'clock came an Indian runner from the Half-king who was encamped with some of his people about six miles off.

"The wolves of the French are gathering about the young white warrior," he told Washington when brought before him. "Tanacharisson has come across their tracks which lead to where they lie in ambush, waiting to spring upon the young chief while he sleeps. Tanacharisson bids him to be wily even as the fox."

"The young chief thanks Tanacharisson for his words of warning," answered Washington in kind. "And now let his messenger rest and refresh himself for he must be weary. Lieutenant West, will you see that the warrior of the Half-king is given food and drink?"

Left alone Washington sat down to consider the matter. He felt sure that the French were only waiting for an opportunity to surprise him with an attack. Should he wait for the assault, retreat, or be the attacker instead of the attacked? He rose and stood in the entrance of his tent, gazing thoughtfully out into the night. It was very dark. From the distance came the rumble of thunder, and the whole night was dull, heavy, and breathless. An owl hooted dismally, and from the forest

rose the wailing scream of a panther. And suddenly his mind was made up: he would attack.

Leaving a guard with the baggage and ammunition he set forth with forty men to join his Indian allies. The darkness intensified. The lightning, which had played incessantly across the low clouds of the horizon, now leaped to higher peaks, and became more vivid. The muttering of the thunder changed to long booming peals. The rain began to fall heavily. It was hard going through the blackness of the night-time woods. Fallen trees and other obstacles made the forest almost impenetrable. Frequently they lost their way; but stumbling and falling they came at last through the darkness and the storm of the night in the chill dawn to the camp of the Half-king.

Tanacharisson received Washington with every demonstration of friendship, and after a hasty council it was agreed that they would unite in an attack upon the lurking enemy. Washington was to approach the French on the right, and the Half-king with his men on the left; all as quietly as possible.

The French were encamped in a secluded nook, a low bottom surrounded by rocks and trees, and had built a few cabins for shelter from the rain. It was a fine hiding place. Washington was first upon the ground. As he moved out from among the trees at the head of his men, some of the French caught sight of him, and ran to their arms.

A sharp firing instantly took place, and was kept up for about fifteen minutes. Washington and his men received all the enemy's fire. The balls whistled around him; one man was killed close by him, and three others wounded. The French, having lost several of their men, gave way and ran. They were soon overtaken; twenty-one were captured, and but one

escaped, a Canadian, who carried the tidings of the affair to the fort on the Ohio. De Jumonville, the French leader, had been killed at the first fire.

Among the prisoners were one Drouillon, an officer of some consequence, and La Force. They claimed at once that they were ambassadors, pretending that they were coming with a summons to Washington to depart from the territory belonging to the crown of France.

Unfortunately for their pretensions, a letter of instructions, found on De Jumonville, betrayed their real errand, and proved their hostile intentions. Much elated because he had taken La Force prisoner, considering him a most dangerous man, Washington retreated to his camp at the Great Meadows, with his prisoners. After supplying Drouillon and La Force with clothing from his own scanty stock, he sent the prisoners under a strong guard to Governor Dinwiddie who was then at Winchester.

He also wrote the Governor a full account of the skirmish, and of his situation which, he realized, would now be critical in the extreme; for, as soon as the fort on the Ohio heard of the matter he might expect hourly to be attacked. He wrote also to Augustine, telling him of the affair, and adding:

"I fortunately escaped without any wound; for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to, and received all the enemy's fire; and it was the part where the man was killed and the rest wounded. I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

In some manner this letter found its way into a column of the London Magazine of that year. Perhaps Augustine, proud and laughing too at the enthusiasm of his young brother, sent it to one of his friends in England. London laughed also,

and pronounced the youthful commander a " brave braggart." His Majesty, George II, remarked dryly: " He would not say so if he had heard many."

But George Washington was but little past twenty-two at the time, and it was his first battle. There seems no just reason why the boy should not have expressed his feelings in a letter to a brother. It was merely another way of saying that the excitement of danger was pleasurable.

In the meantime the young commander was trying to prepare to render as good an accounting of himself with the enemy as was possible under the circumstances. And he was meeting with many difficulties.

The Great Meadows was a grassy plain, perfectly level, and nearly two hundred and fifty yards wide. Almost in its exact centre, on the margin of a small stream, George had built his fort. It was made of logs, one hundred feet square, and surrounded by trenches and palisades. The men named it Fort Necessity because they now began to experience a great scarcity of food. There was mismanagement somewhere, and for six days they were without flour though contracts had been made with Croghan, the Indian trader, to keep them supplied.

In this time of scarcity, the Half-king, with thirty or forty of his warriors, arrived, bringing with them their wives and children. At this time, too, news was received of the death of Colonel Fry who had long been ill, and thus prevented from joining the camp. Soon the rest of the regiment came on to be under Washington, as the command now devolved upon him. With them came Doctor James Craik, the surgeon of the regiment, and George's good friend.

Later, appeared Adjutant Muse, now a major, with Montour, the Indian interpreter, bringing with them nine swivels,

and a small supply of powder and ball. Mr. Gist was sent back to Wills' Creek for further provisions and artillery.

Major Muse was likewise the bearer of presents and medals for the Indians, a measure suggested by Washington. These were distributed with a grand ceremonial, in which a son of Queen Aliquippa was given, by her request, the English name of Fairfax, while the Half-king received that of Dinwiddie. The sachems returned the compliment by giving Washington the name of Connotaucarius. After which the pipe of peace was smoked in Council, and for the time being all was harmony with the savages.

On the 10th of June nine French deserters came into camp. They reported that the fort at the Fork of the Ohio had been completed, and named Duquesne, in honor of the governor of Canada, Marquis Duquesne. It was proof against all attack, excepting with bombs, on the land side. The garrison did not exceed five hundred, but reinforcements were hourly expected.

On this same day Captain Mackay with an independent company of South Carolinians arrived. As the captain held a royal commission he outranked Washington who was a Colonial colonel. The captain, therefore, would not take orders from him. He encamped separately, kept separate guards, and his men kept quite apart from those of Washington. In the event of a conflict with the enemy—and one was constantly expected—this point of rank might be a cause of serious trouble. It was an embarrassing position for the young commander, but he met it with his customary resourcefulness. Leaving the captain with his independent company, who would not work on the roads unless paid a shilling a day extra, as a guard to Fort Necessity Washington pushed forward, undertaking to complete the military road with his own men.

Accordingly he set out, and advanced thirteen miles to Gist's plantation, making a road as he went, and encountering many difficulties. The Indians who accompanied him were importunate in their demands for presents; many of them were but French spies. Washington had scarcely reached Gist's before certain intelligence was brought to him that Fort Duquesne had been reinforced, and that a great number of the French was coming to attack him. Calling in his foraging parties and his scouts he sent a request to Captain Mackay to join him, and began to throw up entrenchments.

Captain Mackay soon came, and at a Council of War it was decided that a better stand could be made at Fort Necessity. The weather was very warm, and the troops, quite exhausted with fatigue, were worn with hunger. There was a deficiency of horses. Washington gave up his own to aid in transporting military munitions, and went on foot, sharing the hardships of the common soldiers.

After two days' weary march the weary troops reached Fort Necessity. For eight days they had eaten no bread, and but little of any other food. They could not retreat further; so Washington began to strengthen the fort by raising a log breastwork, and sent off expresses to hasten supplies and reinforcements.

At this critical juncture the Indian allies deserted him, giving sundry reasons for the action. Washington believed that the true reason was that the Half-king wished to place the women and children in a place of safety. He was meeting every difficulty to the best of his ability, but the situation was very trying.

Early on the morning of the 3rd of July as the young colonel was making the rounds of the camp a sentinel ran in from the woods, wounded and bleeding.

"I've been fired upon, Colonel," he cried. "The Frenchies are coming."

These tidings were confirmed by scouts who hurried in from the woods, saying that a great force of French and Indians was approaching. Before noon distant firing was heard, and soon the gleam of their muskets could be seen among the trees.

Washington drew his men up on open ground and waited for the assault. None came, but the enemy began firing from among the trees. Then he fell back with his men into the trenches, ordering them to fire whenever they could get sight of an enemy. The French kept under covert of the woods and fired incessantly. It was hard for Washington's men to get sight of one of them so as to make effective shots. All day long there was skirmishing. The French advanced as near as the trees would permit, which, in the nearest place, was sixty yards, but never into open sight. In the afternoon a heavy thunderstorm came up. The downpour was so great that it flowed into the trenches, half drowning the jaded and harassed troops, and rendering their muskets unfit for use. By this time all of the horses and cattle of the fort had been slain, twelve men were killed, and forty-three wounded.

Washington withdrew into the palisade, determined to fight stubbornly to the last. But alas! no man can resist long, in the face of great odds, without shot, dry powder, and provisions. He was beginning to realize that he was facing defeat.

About eight o'clock the French called a parley, as there was no longer firing from the fort. Washington declined it.

"It may be but a ruse to get inside to spy out our condition," he said.

A second time the French came, saying that an officer might be sent to treat with them, under their parole for his safety.

As the Chevalier de Peyrouney, the engineer of the regiment and the only one who could speak French correctly, was wounded and disabled, Washington had no choice but to send Van Braam. The captain returned twice with separate terms. Washington knew that he would have to surrender, but he would accept no terms that were not honorable, and these were not so. Very soon Van Braam came back a third time bringing with him from M. de Villiers, the French commander, proposed articles of capitulation.

"Will you translate them, Mr. Van Braam?" asked Washington. "They are written in French, I observe."

"I will try, Colonel," answered the old soldier who could talk the language much better than he could read it.

He sat down on a log while the officers gathered around him, one of them holding a torch light for him to read by. The rain fell in torrents. The wind sobbed in the trees, and the light flickered so fitfully that it was difficult to keep it from being extinguished. Article by article the old trooper rendered the capitulation. He was a Dutchman, not fluent in either English or French, and the translation was altogether a confused and hurried one. But Washington and his officers thought they understood it clearly.

The terms seemed most honorable: they were to march out the next morning with all the honors of war, drums beating and colors flying. They were to give their word of honor not to attempt any buildings or improvements on the lands of His Most Christian Majesty, for the space of a year. The prisoners taken in the skirmish of Jumonville should be restored, and until their delivery Captain Van Braam and Captain Stobo should remain with the French as hostages.

With heavy heart George signed the capitulation. On the

next morning, July 4th, 1754, he and his men marched out of the forlorn fortress. He had, however, scarcely left the Meadows when he encountered one hundred Indians, allies of the French, who set upon him hostilely for plunder and murder. Now one of the articles of the capitulation contained the agreement that he should be allowed to return to the settlements without molestation from the French or the Indians. Seeing, therefore, that the French would not, or could not prevent them, Washington turned upon the savages boldly, scattering them. After which he destroyed all baggage that could not be carried on the shoulders of the troops, and then began the seventy mile journey to Wills' Creek.

After many days, weary and half starved, the detachment reached the place in safety. There were ample provisions here, and leaving his men to recover their strength Washington sadly proceeded to Williamsburg to make his military report to the Governor.

Thus ended the first clash between the French and the English. It had been disastrous to the English claims, and the leaden plates buried by the French on the banks of the Ohio seemed to have asserted a title to the country which France was able to support.

CHAPTER XI

The Coming of Braddock

IN youth defeat is so overwhelming as to seem an irretrievable disaster. The inglorious march and surrender saddened and humbled Washington. He was very young; so it was with heavy heart that he sought the Governor's palace as soon as he reached Williamsburg. The recital did not seem to affect the Governor so much as it did the young man.

"Ah, weel!" he said consolingly, "'tis nae such a matter to grieve over, lad. What could you do with militia? We'll get a few of the home soldiers over, and we'll see the White Coats run. I doubt not but the Burgesses will say that you did your best. Have you brought a copy of the articles of capitulation with you?"

"Yes, your Honor," answered Washington producing it.

"I will lay it before the Burgesses, and let them pass upon it," remarked the Governor. "When it hath been translated we will ask you to wait upon us. And now do you go and rest, Colonel. Nae doubt you need it."

After a short visit at Pine Grove Washington returned to his regiment which had arrived at Alexandria. Meantime, Captain Stobo, who had been left as one of the hostages with

the French, managed to get word to Governor Dinwiddie that the enemy at Fort Duquesne was weak and off guard, and that a quick march against it would capture the fort. Dinwiddie immediately sent word to Washington to complete his regiment to three hundred, and march again into the wilderness. The rashness of the attempt was so manifest that Washington was amazed at the proposal. It was morally impossible to dispossess the French with a force so inferior that it could be harassed and driven from place to place at the pleasure of the enemy. Therefore he earnestly opposed the plan, and it was abandoned.

However, when the House of Burgesses met again, and granted twenty thousand pounds for the public service, and soon after he received ten thousand pounds in specie from England for the same purpose, the Governor applied himself to military matters, of which he knew nothing, with renewed zeal. His plan was to raise an army consisting of ten independent companies of one hundred men each. No officer of the late Virginia regiment was to hold rank higher than a captain, and in addition to this unjust provision, every Colonial captain was to give precedence to a captain royally commissioned. Dinwiddie's arrangement was caused by an order from the English government that officers holding the king's commission should rank provincial officers; and that provincial generals and field officers should have no rank when a general or field officer holding a royal commission was present. Such disparagement of Colonial honor and feeling was deeply resented by the Colonists. It was an unwise ruling of the home government; an exhibition of stupid arrogance which no man could sanction with due regard to self-respect. Washington resigned his commission.

The resignation brought forth a storm of protest. His officers, dismayed at undertaking another campaign without his leadership, wrote him a letter [1] entreating him to reconsider his decision. Washington was so much moved by this letter that for a time his resolve to quit the service was shaken, but reflection convinced him that the stand he had taken was right. He was much affected too by a letter, both flattering and courteous, from Governor Sharpe, of Maryland, appointed by the King Commander-in-chief of all the forces engaged against the French, who was eager to secure his services, recognizing him as the best fighter in Virginia. Respectfully but firmly Washington declined, for neither emolument nor rank could be offered him. It was a bitter disappointment to have to give up military life. His inclination was strongly bent to arms, he had the instinct of the true soldier, and he was humiliated by his military degradation.

So there seemed nothing to do but to retire to Mount Vernon, and devote himself to rural pursuits. There was much about the settlement of his affairs that needed attention. Anne had married George Lee of Westmoreland during the year, and gone to the home of her husband; so that Washington was now in full possession of the property. Scarcely, however, had he engaged in plantation matters, than he was stirred to the depths of his being by the rumor that England was sending over troops to assail the French on the Ohio.

It was true. The Virginia campaigning had aroused the home government, and it was determined to wrest from the French all the conquests they had made upon British dominion. In accordance with this plan General Edward Braddock arrived in Virginia, February 20th, 1755, with two picked regi-

[1] This letter is given in Marshall's Life of Washington.

ments, and encamped at Alexandria, just seven miles from Mount Vernon.

From the portico of the mansion Washington saw the squadron of two ships of war and several transports, under Commodore Keppel, which brought the troops to Alexandria, and the array of arms gleaming along their decks stirred him deeply. Often he rode into the little town, teaming with soldiers like a garrison, and the sight of their lines delighted him. The inspiring music of the fifes and drums made him long to join in the expedition. The campaign would be under the auspices of an experienced general, with all the means and " appurtenances of European warfare," and he who had borne the heat and brunt of the day was not a part of it. To make the campaign became the wish of his heart; he desired only to join as a volunteer.

Through Mr. William Fairfax General Braddock heard of it. Washington was already known to him by reputation, and when Governor Dinwiddie and others spoke of the young man's merits, his knowledge of the country, and his experience in frontier service, the general at once invited him, through Captain Robert Orme, one of his aides-de-camp, to join his staff.

Washington accepted eagerly, stipulating only that he might have a little time to get his affairs in order. It was the very opportunity he had longed for: to study military matters under an experienced general. True, there would be no command, and the position would involve considerable expense, beside a sacrifice of his private interests; but the question of military rank would be obviated, and he could indulge his passion for arms without any sacrifice of dignity, and he would acquire military experience in the family of a commander of acknowledged skill as a tactician.

Despatching Billy Lee post haste to Pine Grove to ask John Augustine to come to him, he began at once to make his arrangements to join the general. Billy Lee returned a few days later, and with him came not only John Augustine but Madam Washington as well. His mother scarcely waited to exchange greetings before she began to speak excitedly:

"And is it the Ohio again, my son?" she cried. "Oh, I have feared it ever since that British general came. My son, do not go! I implore you not to go."

"Dear mother," spoke George taking her hand and kissing it, "we have spoken of this before. If I deem it my duty to go, mother, you would not have me do otherwise."

"You have done your duty, George. Let others take up the work now. You are not needed. Do not go; I entreat you."

"I must do what I think best, mother," answered the young man firmly. "It seems right to me to go, and I believe that I can be of service to General Braddock with my knowledge of the country. When I went last year you placed me in God's keeping. The God to whom you commended me then brought me safely through all danger. I trust that He will do so now. Do not you?"

The poor mother wiped her eyes. War does not hold the same appeal for women, who must watch and wait at home, that it does for men. But the note in her son's voice was that of a man who knew his own mind, and, in spite of his deference for her, she felt that her pleadings would not avail. Bravely she accepted the situation.

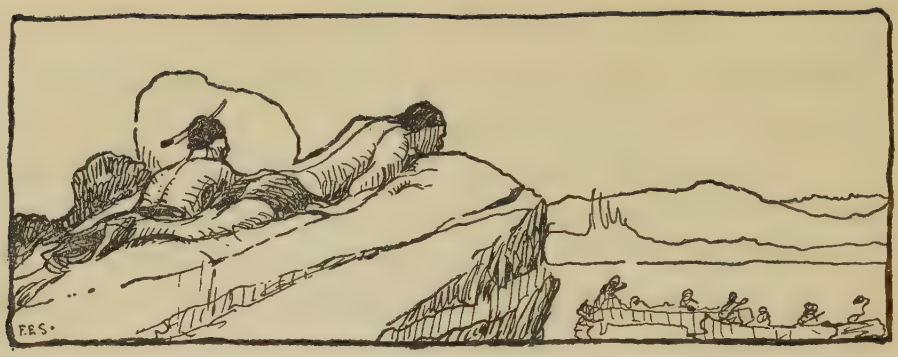
"God is an unfailing and sure trust, my son," she said, laying her hand on his arm with a caressing gesture. "To Him I commend you." And then, after the fashion of mothers, she

added: "You said in your message that the time was short, George. What can I do to help you?"

"I would like to leave Jack here in charge of Mount Vernon," he answered laying his arm across the shoulders of his favorite brother. "You can spare him, can you not?"

"Yes, my son. Samuel and Charles will be all the help I need at home."

It did not take many days to complete his arrangements. Then, one April day, he bade his mother, sister, and brothers good-bye, and rode in the spring sunshine to the headquarters of General Braddock in Alexandria.



CHAPTER XII

A Victim of His Own Folly

IT was Washington's first call upon the general, and his welcome was characteristic of the man.

"Gad, sir!" he exclaimed gazing with undisguised admiration at the stately young figure of his new aide, "you should be in the Guards, sir. You would make a monstrous good one. You are acquainted with the country here, I understand, Colonel Washington?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. I brought with me a small map which I made of the back country. 'Tis imperfect, but it may give you a better knowledge of those parts than you have hitherto had an opportunity to acquire."

"'Fore George, that was a sensible thing to do," ejaculated Braddock, much gratified at this mark of thoughtfulness. "Let us look at it, sir." And soon the two were deep in routes, suitable camping places, and all the order of a march through the wilderness.

It was not long before the English general began to appreciate the merits of the young Provincial officer, and he showed him much respect. Washington's fellow aides, too, Captains Orme and Morris, took him into a cordial companionship; a

cordiality that grew into warm friendship as the campaign progressed. He was a man after their own hearts, full of a pride and purpose equal to their own.

By the middle of April Braddock had called together the governors of New York, Massachusetts Bay, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia for a conference, when it was planned how each Province should help the common cause. Washington was invited to attend, an association with distinguished public men that afterward stood him in good stead.

On the 20th of April General Braddock set out from Alexandria for Fredericktown in Maryland. As became his state the general rode in a magnificent chariot which he had purchased from Governor Sharpe, of Maryland; for he was minded to make the campaign in his own coach. He was accompanied by a body-guard of Virginia Light Horse and his aides. A great throng of planters with their families had gathered to witness the departure of the troops. They cheered lustily as the two fine regiments of British regulars marched by. "Never before had such an army been seen in the Colonies. Their appearance and movements—the perfection of military discipline—created universal admiration and inspired very great confidence in the triumphal issue of the expedition."[1]

To Washington, the huge paraphernalia of war, and the great amount of superfluities to be transported beyond the mountains, was amazing. Young and ardent he had an immense respect for the experienced valor and tactics of the regular troops, but now, recollecting the difficulties he had encountered with nine swivels, and scanty supplies, he shook his head doubtfully. His look of wonderment caught the general's eye, and he leaned forward in the carriage.

[1] "Life and Times of Washington," Schroeder and Lossing.

"What is it, Mr. Washington?" he asked. "You seem perplexed about something."

"I was thinking, sir, that if our march is to be regulated by the slow movements of the train, it will be tedious, very tedious, indeed," replied the young man.

Braddock's lips relaxed into a sarcastic smile. "You are dealing with regulars now, sir," he remarked. "Not with border farm hands."

As became a young provincial officer Washington made no reply, but he remained thoughtful. He was beginning to find out that his general had a contempt for anything Colonial; that he was obstinate about receiving advice; and that he was haughty, self-conceited, self-willed, excessively severe, and greatly lacking in prudence and caution. Yet he was undoubtedly a man of courage, was generous to a fault, full of kind impulses, and an expert in all the punctilios of a review, having been brought up in the English Guards.

At Fredericktown the army had to come to a stand. Contracts for provisions and for horses and baggage-wagons were unfulfilled, and to advance without these was deemed utterly impracticable.

Braddock was exasperated, and anathematized the country generally. Washington strove to help him, but defended his countrymen fearlessly against the furious outbursts. It was a delicate moment requiring all of Washington's courage.

Just at this juncture there appeared a delegation of five Quakers from the Province of Pennsylvania. Washington was standing with several gentlemen of the general's family just outside headquarters when the party rode up.

"Gad!" ejaculated one of the British officers regarding them curiously. "Those folks look like Christian people. They

seem to come from the land of Goshen. Behold the brave fat horses! They are the first plump creatures I have seen since coming to America. I thought the whole land was like Virginia, peopled with Pharaoh's lean kine." [1]

"How can I serve you, gentlemen?" asked Washington stepping forward.

"We would like to see the Commander-in-chief, General Braddock, friend," answered one, a man of about forty-nine years whose shrewd eyes looked humorously from a benevolent face under a great dome of head. "I am Benjamin Franklin, Postmaster General of the Colonies."

"And I am George Washington, an aide to his Excellency," answered the young officer courteously. "I am glad to meet you, sir. Mr. Franklin is renowned among us for his wisdom and learning."

"But not more renowned than is Colonel Washington," remarked the philosopher extending his hand, with a kindly keen glance at the tall figure of the Virginian. "Are you going to the Ohio again, Colonel?"

"Yes; as an aide to the general, sir," the young man told him. "I am a volunteer, serving with a view to improve my knowledge of military matters under so able a commander as General Braddock."

"I have heard that Experience is a good teacher, Colonel," observed the Postmaster quietly as he followed the young man into headquarters.

As he brought the cheering information that the Pennsylvanians were cutting roads to meet the general with a number of wagons loaded with flour, cheese, bacon, and other provisions, he met with a warm reception.

[1] Letter from Fredericktown, by an English Officer.

"By my faith, sir," exclaimed Braddock, "you are a man after my own heart. I sent St. Clair ahead two weeks ago to procure wagons, and so far there have been but twenty-five brought in, with not all of these in serviceable condition."

"'Tis a pity, Your Excellency, that you did not land in Pennsylvania; there almost every farmer has his wagon, and you could have been more easily supplied."

General Braddock caught at his words quickly.

"Then you, sir, who are a man of interest there, can probably procure them for us, and I beg that you will undertake it."

"I will do so, sir," promised Franklin.

He became a daily guest at headquarters, dining with the general every day. On one occasion, being full of good cheer, Braddock began to tell of his intended progress.

"After taking Fort Duquesne," said he, "I am to proceed to Niagara, and, having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time; and I suppose it will, for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days."

Franklin's eyes were very innocent as he replied: "To be sure, sir, if you arrive well before Duquesne with these fine troops, so well provided with artillery, the fort, though completely fortified and garrisoned, can probably make but short resistance. The only danger I apprehend of obstruction to your march is the difficulty of reaching the place. You must go through a forest almost untrodden, over roads that you will have to make yourself, and your line will be some four miles long. You will be exposed to attack from enemies whom you will never see, and whose constant practice in war is the dexterous laying of ambuscades."

"These savages," remarked Braddock with a smile at the ignorance of the civilian, "may indeed be a formidable enemy

to raw American militia, but upon the King's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible that they should make an impression."

Franklin said no more, but for one instant his glance met that of Washington's. Both men saw the uselessness of saying anything further, and both showed plainly their uneasiness.

After Franklin's departure Braddock attended by his staff and his guard of Light Horse set off for Wills' Creek. The discomforts of the rough road were increased with the general by his travelling in his chariot, but as His Majesty's representative he believed that he should travel with some degree of state. With the drums beating the "Grenadiers' March" as he passed, and amid a thundering salute of seventeen guns he arrived at Fort Cumberland.

At once the firm soldier hand was felt throughout the little army. And Washington, looking with ardent eyes at this new military pageant, had an opportunity of seeing a force encamped according to the plan approved by the Council of War; and military tactics enforced with all the precision of a martinet. It was an invaluable lesson.

During the halt of the troops here George Croghan, the Indian trader and interpreter, joined the camp with one hundred Indians who might have been of great use to the army as guides and scouts if Braddock had treated them kindly, but he slighted and neglected them, and all but a few gradually left him.

The horses and wagons which Franklin had undertaken to procure at length arrived, and the tedious waiting came to an end. With his characteristic promptness and unwearied exertions he had obtained them from the reluctant Pennsylvania farmers, being obliged to pledge his own responsibility for their being fully remunerated.

At last, on the 10th of June, the army began the march through the wilderness. Washington had worried over the delay, fearing that the season would be so far advanced that the campaign would have to be abandoned. By this time a glimmer of reason had come to the general, and he discovered that the wilderness was not the place for display; so he left his coach behind him. As Washington had foretold the march over the mountains proved a "tremendous undertaking," and this in spite of the fact that Sir Peter Halket's Brigade had marched ahead to cut down trees, remove rocks, and open a road. It was with difficulty the heavily laden wagons could be dragged up the steep and rugged roads, newly made, or imperfectly repaired. Often they extended for three or four miles in a straggling or broken line, with the soldiers so dispersed in guarding them, that an attack on any side would have thrown the whole into confusion.

So many delays occurred that Braddock himself began to have serious doubts of reaching Fort Duquesne before the close of the season. He was beginning to find that there was some difference between campaigning in a new country, and the old, worn battle-fields of Europe. Of his own accord he went to Washington for advice.

"I would push forward," said Washington, "with a body of picked troops, and ammunition on pack-horses, and so surprise Fort Duquesne before it can be reënforced. Leave the baggage, the heavy artillery, and such like with the rear division of the army, to follow by slow and easy marches, which they might do safely while we were advanced in front."

His advice was accepted, and the general, with twelve hundred men, carrying a small supply of necessary stores and a few pieces of light artillery, moved forward. Colonel Dunbar

with the rest of the troops and the heavy baggage followed by slow marches.

During the halt at Little Meadows Captain Jack, a noted border warrior and scout, and his band of forest rangers made their appearance in camp, and offered their services as a reconnoitering party to beat up the Indians in their lurking places and ambuscades. But Braddock would not listen to him.

"There is time enough, sir," he said, "for making such arrangements; and I have experienced troops, on whom I can rely for all purposes."

Indignant at this reception Captain Jack and his men left the camp. Washington was a grave witness of the incident.

"The general is making a great mistake, Colonel," observed George Croghan, the Indian trader, his disappointment plainly visible. He had been at pains to secure the offer of Captain Jack's services.

"I fear so, Mr. Croghan," answered Washington soberly.

In his advice to the general the young colonel had insisted that a quick march was essential to success. To his great disappointment he found the old folly still going on. Instead of pushing forward with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, Braddock halted to level "every molehill, and erect bridges over every brook," so that the troops were four days in getting twelve miles.

And now, quite suddenly, Washington found himself in the grip of a violent fever. Yet he continued with the army though he was so prostrated that he could not sit his horse, and had to be carried in a covered wagon. Dr. Craik advised a camp by the road until he was better, and at the great crossing of the Youghiogheny General Braddock assigned him a guard, provided him with necessaries, and requested him to re-

main there under care of his physician. This Washington was reluctant to do, fearing that he might miss the attack on Fort Duquesne if he did.

" Captain Orme," he said to his brother aide who joined his entreaties to those of the general and the doctor, " I would not miss it for five hundred pounds."

Orme laughed; but Braddock, who heard the words, now pledged his honor that before the army reached the fort arrangements should be made for his rejoining it. Orme too promised, if he would remain, he would keep him informed by letter of every occurrence of note.

Notwithstanding these kind assurances the Virginia colonel watched the troops depart with gloomy feelings. For some days he continued in a state of extreme debility. The rear division under Colonel Dunbar did not reach him for eight days, but when it came, he continued forward with it. His fever had moderated by this time, but his weakness was excessive. Letters from his fellow aides kept him informed of the incidents of the march; the frequent night alarms which the army was experiencing, and the occasional scalping of stragglers; but the men seemed in the best of spirits, and confident of victory.

On the 3rd of July an advance party of one hundred men left to join the general, and Washington considered himself sufficiently recovered to go on with them. Still too weak to mount his horse he set off with the escort in a covered wagon. After a most fatiguing journey, through forest and over mountain, he reached Braddock's camp on the 8th of July, much to the surprise of the general who gave him a warm welcome. He was just in time; for the attack upon Fort Duquesne was to be made the next day.

The camp was near the junction of the Youghiogheny and

PANIC REIGNED ON THE FRONTIER. BANDS OF SAVAGES WERE MARAUDING THE SETTLEMENTS

the Monongahela Rivers, within fifteen miles of the French fort. The fort was on the same side of the river with the camp; but the pass between them was very narrow, with the river on one side and a very high hill on the other. It was also so overgrown with brush and trees as to be impassable for carriages. It was therefore determined to ford the river and march for some distance on its south bank; then to return to the north bank by fording the stream again.

Washington was delighted at the prospect of at last attacking the French, but he knew the nature of the ground that would have to be traversed before the fort was reached, and he had "already seen enough of regular troops to doubt their infallibility in wild-bush fighting." Therefore, when he had heard the plan of march outlined, he approached General Braddock with a suggestion.

"General," he said, "the Virginia rangers are accustomed to the country, and to Indian warfare, which we must expect to encounter to-morrow. Why not then throw them into the advance to beat up any lurking savages?"

"Colonel Washington," spoke Braddock curtly, "my plan of attack is arranged, sir. Permit me to say that General Braddock needs no advice as to how to attack a fort."

Silently Washington saluted, and withdrew. But the next morning he braved the general's displeasure by again proposing that the Virginia woodsmen should open the way. Braddock turned upon him sharply.

"What!" he exclaimed. "A Provincial colonel teach a British general how to fight? Have done, sir! I wish to hear no more of this." Then turning to his faithful servant, Bishop, he observed:

"Bishop, this young man is determined to go into action to-

day, although he is really too much weakened by illness for any such purpose. Have an eye to him, and render him any service that may be necessary."

"Your Honor's orders shall be obeyed, sir," answered the servant. This kindness took away the sting of his recent sharpness, and Washington turned away wondering anew at the contradictions of his commander's character.

Colonel Gage had already crossed the river with the advance, and by sunrise the main body turned out in full uniform. The march was made in the most orderly manner, with bayonets fixed, colors flying, and drums and fifes beating and playing the "Grenadiers' March." The regulars marched in front; and the Virginian and other provincial rangers of the woods brought up the rear, to assist in the improbable event that their services would be required. It was a glittering and gleaming pageant in the morning sunshine. One so inspiring, so beautiful, so different from anything that he had ever seen that Washington forgot his illness, and burst forth into expressions of youthful enjoyment and enthusiastic admiration. A shadow of a smile stirred the grim general's lips as he heard him.

After crossing to the northern margin of the river, ten miles from the fort, an advanced column of the troops marched over a plain and up an ascent between two ravines. The ground was covered with long grass, and a thick tangled covert of brushwood and trees. The remaining troops had scarcely forded the river when suddenly heavy discharges of musketry were heard on the front and right flank.

"Indians!" escaped Washington's lips.

It was true. That which he had feared, and against which Braddock had been warned again and again, had happened.

For want of scouting parties ahead, the advance was suddenly and warmly attacked. All at once a young Frenchman had come bounding along the path to meet them, wearing the gorget of an officer, and the forest behind him swarmed with what seemed a host of Canadians and Indians. He waved his hat, and his skirmishers scattered to the right and left, behind the trees and rocks, leaving the French in the centre. With a shout of " God save the King! " the British opened fire upon this force, killing about twelve men. This first quick fire was the only gleam of success that the English experienced.

The main body of troops cheered and huzzahed heartily as they heard the shouts and fire of their comrades of the advance. Braddock ordered Colonel Burton to hasten to their assistance with the vanguard of the main body. The residue were halted, and posted to protect the artillery and baggage.

As the firing continued with fearful yelling, the general himself with his aides and troops spurred forward, leaving Sir Peter Halket in command of the baggage.

They met the van flying back. Everything at the front was in an uproar. The attacking party had concealed themselves in the ravines and behind trees, and thus, unseen, poured in a deadly fire upon the British. From behind every bush and tree came shots, deliberately singling out their victims, which laid man after man low. Most of the Grenadiers and many of the pioneers were shot down.

The men halted, huddled up together in spite of the shouts and orders of the officers to advance, and fired wildly into the woods and thickets. The contagion of fear seized the main body who for the first time heard the Indian yells and war whoops. They were more dismayed by these than by the rifles of the unseen savages. Everything was in confusion.

Braddock tried to rally the men. But the regulars had lost their heads at the merciless fire from the ravines; they fired in the air, were seized by mortal panic, and had not even presence of mind enough to fly. The officers, who acted " with incomparable bravery," in vain attempted to make them advance. They seemed not to hear the words, or to feel the flats of the swords striking their backs; the terrible fire pouring into their ranks from the unseen foe paralyzed them. Right and left from the tangled ravines issued the fatal volleys; and at every shot almost, a redcoat fell.

Of the whole army no troops, excepting only the despised Virginia rangers, showed the least presence of mind in the emergency. They scattered, and betook themselves to trees from behind which they assailed the enemy as they were accustomed to do. This and the cannon were all that preserved the regulars from a consecutive butchery. Washington besought the general in agonized tones to adopt the same plan with his troops; but he persisted in forming them into platoons; and they were cut down from behind trees and logs as fast as they could advance. It was not, strictly speaking, a battle; it was mere slaughter.

Throughout the entire battle Washington attended General Braddock. Early in the fray Orme and Morris, his fellow aides, had been wounded and disabled, and the " whole duty of carrying the orders of the general devolved on him. He was in every part of the field, a conspicuous mark for the murderous rifles. Two horses were shot from under him. Four bullets passed through his coat. His escape without a wound was almost miraculous. At one time he was sent to the main body to bring the artillery into action. All there was likewise in confusion; for the Indians had extended themselves along the

ravines so as to flank the reserve and carry slaughter into the ranks. Their commander was dead. The men who should have served the guns were stricken with panic. Washington strove to rouse them into action, but they paid no heed. In his ardor he sprang from his horse, wheeled and pointed a brass field-piece with his own hand, and directed an effective discharge into the woods; but neither his efforts nor example were of avail. The men could not be kept to the guns." [1]

Returning to report to the general the Virginia woodsmen cheered him as he dashed back through the ranks of death. The young colonel answered with a ringing shout:

" Hold your ground, my brave fellows, and draw your sights for the honor of old Virginia! " [2]

Years afterward an old Indian chief who had been in this battle declared that he had singled out Washington for destruction, ordering his warriors to make him a special mark.

" See the young chief who does not wear a red coat," he had said. " He fights as we do. Kill him." But when Washington's second horse fell under him, he cried to his warriors: " Fire at him no more; see ye not that the Great Spirit protects that chief? He cannot die in battle." [3]

All during the action Braddock remained in the centre of the field, in the desperate hope of retrieving the fortunes of the day. The Virginians, who had been most effective in covering his position, were nearly all killed or wounded. Shirley, his secretary, had been shot through the head. Many of his officers had fallen, and of his guard of Light Horse many had gone down in his sight. He did all that a brave soldier could do to check the flight of his men. Five horses had been killed under

[1] Washington Irving: " Life of Washington."
[2] " George Washington," Parke-Custis.
[3] *Ibid.*

him; still he kept his ground. He wished at least to effect a retreat in good order, but no man can make headway against cowardice of a mass of troops. At length a bullet passed through his right arm, and lodged itself in his lungs. He fell from his horse, but was caught by Captain Stewart of the Virginia Light Horse, and Bishop, his servant, placed in a tumbrel, and taken from the field, pleading in his despair to be left to die there.

The men were now in the wildest disorder. As the general fell they threw away their guns, accoutrements, and even their clothes, and rushed into the river. Cannon, infantry, and horse went pell-mell, and the remnant of the Virginia rangers was obliged to follow. The regulars ran "like sheep pursued by dogs," and it was impossible to rally them. More than half their number had fallen under that hidden fire. Out of eighty-six officers twenty-six were killed, and thirty-six wounded. The Virginians were nearly decimated. The number of the British army killed and wounded were seven hundred and fourteen.

Attended by his brave English officers and the faithful Virginians, Braddock continued his retreat to the camp which his troops had left in such brilliant array in the morning. Once he turned to Washington who was still in attendance, and exclaimed:

"My dear Colonel, had I been governed by your advice we never should have come to this! But we shall know better how to deal with them another time."

"Yes, General," answered Washington consolingly.

"Who would have thought it?" ejaculated Braddock feverishly. "Are you wounded, sir?"

"No, Your Excellency."

"Then do you ride to Colonel Dunbar's camp, and tell him to hurry forward provisions, hospital stores, and wagons for the wounded, and to bring them on under escort of two grenadier companies."

"Yes, General." Washington saluted, and withdrew.

He was still weak from illness and the fatigue of battle, but he was the most efficient officer in frontier service, and therefore must go. The night was falling as he mounted his horse, and started on his hard ride. Dunbar's camp was forty miles distant, and it was a most melancholy ride. He arrived at the camp in the evening of the following day, and found the greatest agitation prevailing; for the tidings of the defeat had preceded him, borne by the wagoners, who had mounted their horses, on Braddock's fall, and fled from the field. Their panic had communicated itself to the soldiers, wagoners, and attendants of the camp, and many of them had taken to flight. Stringent measures were used to keep the others from following them.

As Washington started back the next morning with the convoy of supplies he met Gage and his scanty force escorting Braddock and his wounded officers to the camp. On the 13th they arrived at Great Meadows. Throughout the march Braddock had indulged a faint hope that his wound was not mortal, but when the camp at Great Meadows was reached his weakness was so great that he realized that death was approaching. Calling Bishop, his faithful and long tried follower, to his side, he said:

"Bishop, you are getting too old for wars; I advise you to remain in America and go into the service of Colonel Washington. Be but as faithful to him as you have been to me, and rely upon it the remainder of your days will be prosperous and

happy. Colonel Washington, receive him, I beg of you. Also accept my favorite charger for your own. I should have listened to you, Colonel Washington."

Washington could not speak for emotion. Shortly after Braddock died. Whatever his faults he was a brave man. Just before the break of day a melancholy cortège wound its way to the outskirts of the camp. And there, about a mile from the site of Fort Necessity, all that remained of the proud general was laid to rest. "All was done in sadness and without parade, so as not to attract the attention of lurking savages, who might discover and outrage his grave." As the chaplain was wounded Washington read the funeral service. They fired no volley; only the twittering of birds, and the soft sighing of the wind in the tree-tops sounded a requiem as they left him—a victim of over-confidence and conceit.

CHAPTER XIII

The Borderland

THE demoralized army continued its flight to Fort Cumberland. Once arrived, Washington expected that Colonel Dunbar would get his troops in order, and organize for the defense of the frontier. To his amazement, however, Dunbar destroyed all the ammunition, stores, and artillery, and, leaving the wounded and sick under the care of two provincial companies, disregarding the urgent appeals of the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia for detachments of men to protect their boundaries, betook himself to Philadelphia. " In order," observed the Colonists sarcastically, " that its citizens might protect him from the savages."

Washington burned with indignation at a defection that left the whole frontier open to the ravages of the French and Indians. He had wondered greatly that there had been no pursuit after the defeat at the Monongahela, and felt a bitter humiliation when he learned that the attacking party had been but a small detachment of the enemy who only expected to harass and annoy Braddock; victory was not anticipated. The French commander, on the contrary, had despaired of holding Fort Duquesne. Such reports of the numbers of Braddock's

force had reached him that he was debating whether to stand fast or to evacuate the fort, when De Beaujeu, a gallant young officer, offered to take a force and advance to meet the English. To this De Contrecœur assented. De Beaujeu marched promptly and the collision followed.

Washington looked after the comfort of his fellow aides, Orme and Morris, wrote a circumstantial account of the battle to Governor Dinwiddie, and then found himself obliged to take to his bed—ill of fever and exhaustion. As his connection with the army ceased with the death of Braddock he returned to Mount Vernon as soon as he could sit a horse, arriving there on the 26th of July, still very feeble from his long illness.

The news of the disaster spread a gloom throughout the Colonies. Men could scarcely believe the story of the ill-fated expedition. That two such famous regiments which had fought in the Scottish and Continental wars had fled from a band of savages and a few French infantry seemed incredible. "It was the first suspicion of the Americans that their exalted ideas of the prowess of the British regular troops had not been well founded," wrote Benjamin Franklin long afterward.

The whole Province of Virginia awoke to the danger that menaced the frontier, and the Assembly met at once to devise measures for the public safety. They issued orders for raising a regiment of a thousand men, and Washington was proposed as a candidate for the command. His mother heard of it, and in great alarm wrote to him, imploring him not to go to the frontier again.

Washington was willing to serve the country, but he had come out of every expedition as a loser. When, therefore, his friends broached the subject of the command he replied frankly, stating the terms upon which he would accept it. To his

mother he wrote, with the respectful deference he always accorded her, that he would avoid taking the command, unless it were pressed upon him by the general wish of the country, and offered upon honorable terms. It was the last time that Mary Washington ever voiced an objection to any of her son's wishes. She had learned finally that he was a man.

In Williamsburg the question of the recognition of his abilities and services was much discussed. He was at this time something of a popular hero. His gallant conduct in battle, his wonderful escape without a wound, and the knowledge that if his advice had been heeded the terrible disaster would not have occurred, all served to make him the favorite soldier for the command. Governor Dinwiddie preferred Colonel Innes, but found himself obliged to bow to public sentiment and appoint Washington to the place. On the 14th of August, 1755, when he was twenty-three years and six months of age, Washington received his commission as Commander-in-Chief of all the forces raised, or to be raised, in Virginia. He was authorized to name his field officers, and allowed an aide-de-camp and secretary.

It was little less than a month after his return from the Monongahela, but the young commander entered upon his duties promptly. After a visit to Williamsburg for instructions he went at once to Winchester, where he fixed his headquarters. He was here very near to Greenway Court, and his friend, Lord Fairfax. The old nobleman was lord-lieutenant of the county, with Greenway Court as his headquarters. He had organized a troop of horse, and was now as "prompt to mount for cavalry parade as he ever was for a fox hunt. He was of great assistance to Washington, both with his sword and his counsel."

Washington found the frontier in a feverish state of excitement. An incursion of the Indians had created great alarm, and the community was so given over to terror that it was impossible to get the people to act together for their common safety. A detachment of militia was sent immediately against the invaders, and a severe infliction taught them that their depredations would meet with speedy vengeance. The band soon afterward, being satiated with carnage, conflagration, and plunder, retreated across the mountains which allayed the panic and restored a temporary quiet to the harassed frontier.

Washington now visited the frontier posts, established recruiting places, and took other measures of security, then turned his attention to training the new recruits and the militia in the methods of "bush fighting." So the winter came on, the alarms died away, and peace, in a degree, settled on the inhabitants.

It was an almost herculean task that had been set for him. He had to guard a frontier of more than three hundred and fifty miles in extent, and had but few troops with which to do it. It was an easy matter for the House of Burgesses to vote troops; it was quite another thing to raise them. When they were raised they were neglected and ill-treated by the Governor and the Assembly, much to Washington's indignation. The wretched character of the service rendered by the militia caused him much perplexity, and he wrote long letters to Williamsburg, recounting existing evils, and praying for new militia laws. To a large extent the Governor managed the militia movements, and he did not relish Washington's criticisms of the system.

As though repelling invasions of savages with troops inadequate were not enough there was added to his other vexations

the old miserable question of rank. A captain commissioned in any Province was independent of a higher officer whose commission was given by another Colony. There was present at Fort Cumberland a Maryland captain, with a king's commission, who had been placed at the head of thirty men by Governor Sharpe. He refused obedience to the Virginia Commander-in-Chief, claiming precedence over him according to the king's order in the case of royal and provincial officers. The Governor of Maryland sustained his claim, and grave questions arose between the governors of the two Colonies. To settle the annoying and embarrassing affair it was determined to refer the matter to General Shirley, who had succeeded Braddock in the general command of the Colonies, and it fell to Washington to go to Boston to lay the difficulty before him. It was midwinter, but attended by his aide, Captain Mercer, and by Captain Stewart of the Light Horse, he set forth on the 4th day of February, 1756, on the journey of five hundred miles on horseback.

They were young men, and had learned from Braddock the value of making a brave showing when on parade. Therefore, all three wore new uniforms of buff and blue, with gay sword-knots, and "horse furniture" of the best London make, trimmed with "livery lace." Washington had his crest engraved upon the housings of his horse. Behind the young men rode their servants in livery; the colonel's in the Washington colors of scarlet and white, and wearing hats laced with silver. It was a brilliant little cavalcade which attracted much attention. Washington's name was, at this time, well known throughout the Colonies, and both the other young men had distinguished themselves in the late defeat. Consequently they excited universal interest, and their passage through the cap-

itals of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston was a continual fête.

By the 27th of February they were in Boston. General Shirley had met with Washington the April before at the conference of governors with Braddock, and received him cordially. So far as the question of rank between officers commissioned by the different Colonies was concerned Washington carried his point. The Governor gave a written order saying that each provincial officer must obey his superior in nominal rank, even if that superior were commissioned by another Colony. But he would not say that American officers could command officers commissioned by the Crown; so the question of rank between provincial and regular troops was left open. The general also acquainted the young colonel with the details of his plans for the next season's campaign.

The preceding year had been a disastrous one for the English. Of the four expeditions sent against the French, but one had been successful: that against Nova Scotia. The defeat of Braddock had paralyzed the other two against Niagara and Crown Point. In the ensuing campaign Shirley hoped to recover some of England's lost honor.

Colonel Washington was greatly interested in these plans, and attended a meeting of the General Court where the proposed military operations were freely discussed. The social leaders of the town showered the most cordial attentions upon him, and he carried away with him very pleasant memories of the New England metropolis.

The last of March found him at Williamsburg urging an increase in the military force so that Virginia might join in General Shirley's projected campaign, one of the objects of which was the besieging of Fort Duquesne. Washington be-

lieved that the conquest of this place would mean the safety of the frontier, and was very anxious for its attack.

While thus engaged he received a despatch from Winchester containing the tidings that the French and Indians were again spreading death and desolation along the frontier. Washington went post haste to Winchester.

Panic reigned on the frontier. A merciless band of savages, led by Frenchmen, was marauding the settlements leaving a trail of devastation in its wake. Every hour brought new tales of terror. Farmhouses and villages went up in smoke, families were massacred, even stockaded forts were attacked in broad day. The valley of the Shenandoah was penetrated, and the danger approached Winchester itself.

Washington did all that he could in the emergency. But scouting parties were waylaid and butchered. In a skirmish Captain Mercer was killed. The country was overrun with the enemy, and the troops were too few to successfully stay their depredations. Notwithstanding every precaution and the greatest vigilance Indians continued to hunt the roads, and pick up straggling persons.

Desolation and murder increased. Every plantation in the settlements beyond the Blue Ridge was deserted. As Winchester was the centre of all the public roads it became the sole refuge of the inhabitants. The distressed people flocked to the little town for protection, turning to Washington as their main hope. The women surrounded him, holding up their children, and imploring him to save them from the savages. The young commander's heart was wrung with anguish. He looked at the supplicant crowd with a countenance full of pity. In broken tones he promised them to do all that he could to protect them, even to giving his own life.

Yet what could he do? He had but a barrel or two of powder; there was a scarcity of provisions also; his men were dispersed into such small bodies along the frontier guarding the people and public stores that he was not able to make, or even form a body.[1] Unfurnished with necessary men and means for defence he appealed to the Governor in touching terms:

"I am too little acquainted with pathetic language to attempt a description of these people's distresses. But what can I do? I see all the situation; I know their danger, participate in their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief than uncertain promises. . . .

"The supplicating tears of the women, and moving petitions of the men, melt me into such deadly sorrow, that I solemnly declare if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that it would contribute to the people's ease."

This letter so moved the Governor that he gave an instant order for a militia force from the upper counties to go to Washington's assistance.

Washington was willing to give his life for the welfare of the people. Yet at this very time a plot was formed to effect his removal from his post. Numerous reports to the discredit of the army, the officers, and the commander himself, were circulated through the columns of a newspaper. He was deeply wounded, and thought at once of resigning his commission. He declared publicly that nothing but the imminent danger of the times prevented him. His resignation was what his calumniators hoped to effect, but the artifice was seen through, and its aims defeated. His friends rallied to his support, ex-

[1] Letter to Dinwiddie. Washington.

pressing the high esteem entertained of his services in strong letters.

"Our hopes, dear George," wrote Mr. Speaker Robinson, "are all fixed on you for bringing our affairs to a happy issue. Consider what fatal consequences to the country if you resign at this time may be, especially as there is no doubt most of the officers will follow your example."

Colonel Fairfax, and others wrote also, so that Washington continued in office cheered and encouraged by the knowledge that his services were properly appreciated and understood throughout the country.

Meanwhile the woods were full of Indians, and it kept the young colonel busy to repel their inroads, scour the forests and suspected places in all the mountains and valleys, and defend the long line of frontier. At length, about the beginning of May, they suddenly retreated across the mountains to the Ohio, and a short respite was given the harassed settlers.

Washington improved the opportunity by turning his attention to the measures proposed by the Burgesses for frontier security. It had been resolved to increase the army to 1,500 men and to establish a line of twenty-three forts, which, extending from the Potomac to the borders of North Carolina, would constitute a frontier defense for a distance between three and four hundred miles. He did not favor this plan. There were not men enough to garrison so many forts, and the distance would be too great between them to keep perfect watch over the intervening country; the frontier could be overrun before its widely posted defenders could be alarmed and concentrated. There was too the cost of building, and the constant expense of supplies and transportation to be taken into consideration.

He himself preferred a few strong to many feeble garrisons, with the establishment of a centre fort at Winchester. It was a place of the utmost importance, where all the main roads met, of a wide range of scattered settlements, where tidings could soonest be collected from every quarter, and reinforcements and supplies could most readily be forwarded. It was also to be a place of refuge, and a grand deposit of military supplies. He wished also strong military enactments which would raise the militia, when they were embodied, into the character of a regular armed force.

However, the plan of the twenty-three forts was persisted in, though the grand central fort at Winchester, it was decreed, should be erected. Throughout the summer of 1756, therefore, Washington planned and constructed the proposed military works. The great fortress at Winchester was commenced, and was given the name of Fort Loudon, in honor of the new Commander-in-Chief; for General Shirley had been recalled to England, and Lord Loudon appointed to the command.

But throughout the whole year Washington found himself hampered and embarrassed by Governor Dinwiddie. The Governor had never recovered from the pique caused by the elevation of Washington to the command in preference to his favorite, Colonel Innes. He was jealous of the young man's popularity, and strove by every means in his power to so disgust him with the service as to induce him to resign. Washington was bewildered and perplexed by the contradictions in Dinwiddie's letters.

"My orders," he wrote in a letter to Speaker Robinson, "are dark, doubtful, and uncertain; to-day approved, to-morrow condemned. Left to act and proceed at hazard, accountable for the consequences, and blamed without the benefit of a defence."

He determined, however, to bear these trials until Lord Loudon arrived, hoping for improvement.

But Lord Loudon did not put in an appearance until the 29th of July. Nothing had been done by General Abercrombie along the northern frontier, and as the season was so far advanced his lordship did not care to undertake any great enterprise. Instead he went into comfortable winter quarters in New York.

The new commander of the French, the Marquis de Montcalm, however, was a man of different calibre. He seemed to have the idea that his Government had sent him over to America to do something, and therefore he acted where his antagonist meditated. Crown Point and Ticonderoga were strengthened and secured; then, with a force of Canadians and Indians, he ascended the St. Lawrence, and compelled the forts Ontario and Oswego to surrender to him. Thus, through the supineness of the British commanders, the whole back country was opened up to the depredations of the savages.

At the opening of the new year, 1757, Lord Loudon held a meeting in Philadelphia of the governors of the southern Colonies to consult about measures of defense for their respective provinces. Dinwiddie's disagreeable tactics with Washington had continued, culminating in an order to remove the fortress from Winchester to Fort Cumberland, in Maryland, and the young commander was laboring under many discouragements. Fearing that matters had been set before Lord Loudon in an unfavorable light, and being desirous of placing them properly before the Commander-in-Chief, he obtained an ungracious permission from the Governor to be present at the meeting.

About a month before the time of meeting he sent a long

explanatory letter to Lord Loudon, narrating the state of military affairs in Virginia. It had the desired effect, and on arriving at Philadelphia, he was received in a manner that showed him that he was favorably regarded. Lord Loudon consulted him frequently on points of frontier service, and for the most part adopted his advice. He was disappointed to learn that no attack on Fort Duquesne was contemplated. Washington believed with cause that its capture would be more likely to ensure the peace and safety of the southern frontier than all its forts and defenses.

But it was Lord Loudon's plan that, while he attacked Crown Point and northern forts, the southern and middle Colonies were to maintain a merely defensive warfare; also he required that Virginia should send 400 of her troops to the aid of South Carolina which would leave her weaker than ever.

Washington was anxious to have his troops placed on the same footing as the regular army, and that he and his officers should hold royal commissions, but this was refused him. And this in spite of the fact that a regiment of Americans had been raised, called Royal Americans, given the same establishment as the regular troops, and its officers royal commissions. He rejoiced, however, when he was instructed to conduct all operations under the general orders of Colonel Stanwix, an accomplished British officer, stationed on the Pennsylvania frontier, and appointed Commander-in-Chief of the middle and southern Provinces.

Lord Loudon also ordered the Virginia troops and stores to be returned to Fort Loudon at Winchester, which once more became headquarters. On the whole Washington returned to his duties much encouraged. A welcome communication from Dinwiddie, instructing him to look to Colonel Stanwix for

orders, awaited him. He found his intercourse with the colonel of the most agreeable nature. Colonel Stanwix was a gentleman of education and refinement, as well as of great military ability.

After all the great plan of operations at the north met with failure. The reduction of Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, which had long been contemplated, was abandoned in favor of the capture of Louisberg. This was a place of great importance, situated on the Island of Cape Breton, and strongly fortified. "It commanded the fisheries of Newfoundland, overawed New England, and was a bulwark to Acadia."

So Lord Loudon sailed in July for Halifax. He found Louisberg almost impregnable, and protected by a strong sea force. He gave up all idea of attacking it, and, as some of the vessels of his fleet were damaged by a tempest, returned forthwith to New York. But Montcalm was active, following up his successes of the preceding year by besieging Fort William Henry, on the southern shore of Lake George, until he succeeded in obtaining its surrender.

The frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, meanwhile, were harassed by repeated inroads of the enemy. Shorn of part of his force by the detachment to South Carolina, Washington was left with only seven hundred men to defend the wide extent of frontier. The valley of the Shenandoah was almost deserted by its inhabitants, and was fast relapsing into a wilderness.

So the year wore away in this harassing service; his vexations heightened by continual misunderstandings with Governor Dinwiddie. Notwithstanding the fact that he had given directions to Washington to take orders from Colonel Stanwix the Governor did not cease to give commands, require returns,

and utter complaints as usual. Washington, in fact, had two masters; enough to perplex and bewilder any commander.

He bore with all as patiently as he could, but his unremitting attention to his duties for so long a time, coupled with Dinwiddie's petty tyranny so preyed upon his spirits that he fell ill of a lingering and debilitating fever. He tried to continue his service, but at length yielded to the entreaties of his physician, Dr. Craik, and withdrew for rest to Mount Vernon.

CHAPTER XIV

Mars Surrenders to Venus

IT was four months before Washington was able to return to his command at Fort Loudon. At this time his condition was such as to cause grave fears of a decline, and he wrote to Colonel Stanwix expressing despair of rendering that immediate service that the country might require, and saying that he thought of quitting the army.

A gradual improvement in his health and prospects, however, changed this melancholy view, and at the beginning of April he was again in command at Fort Loudon. In January Governor Dinwiddie returned to England, much to the relief of the Virginians in general and Washington in particular. He complained that the young "Provincial," as he called Washington, had treated him with scant ceremony. The basis of their differences was the fact that Washington was a soldier, and Dinwiddie a man filling a position for which he was totally unfitted. Mr. Francis Fauquier had been appointed to succeed him as governor, and until he should arrive, Mr. John Blair, president of the Council and a friend of Washington, had charge of the government.

An auspicious change had also taken place in the administra-

tion of affairs in the mother country. William Pitt, a man of action, who from the humble position of ensign in the Guards had raised himself to the ministry, was placed in charge of public matters. At once he recalled Lord Loudon, and gave the chief command of the forces in the Colonies to General Abercrombie.

Early in the spring Abercrombie was to enter upon the campaign with an army of 50,000 men, the largest ever embodied in America. The forces were to be divided into three detached bodies, and three points of attack were marked out: Louisberg and the Island of Cape Breton, under command of General Amherst; Ticonderoga and Crown Point under Abercrombie himself; and Fort Duquesne on the Ohio under General Forbes. Public confidence in both England and the Colonies revived, and it was believed that the year would see the end of the long contest.

It was with new life and vigor, therefore, that Washington returned to Winchester. He was still commander-in-chief of the Virginian forces which were to make part of the army of General Forbes in the expedition against Fort Duquesne. As the success of this expedition would depend largely upon the success of the other two, operations went on very slowly in the middle and southern Colonies. Washington gathered together his scattered regiments at Fort Loudon, and diligently disciplined his recruits. He now had two Virginia regiments, amounting, when complete, to about 1,900 men, and seven hundred warriors had also come into camp. This force lacked almost every requisite,—arms, tents, ammunition, field-equipage, and so forth. Washington had written repeatedly to the government of the destitute state of the troops, but without avail. So now, under orders from Sir John St. Clair, quarter-

master-general of the forces under General Forbes, he repaired to Williamsburg to lay the matter before the Council.

It was May when Washington set off for the little Virginia capital, attended by Bishop, Braddock's military servant, who had taken service with Washington as his master had desired. May, and the woods were filled with the seductive songs of thousands of birds; the leaves rustled in the sighing wind, and the creatures of the forest moved with soft tread through the sun-kissed trees. May; but the grave young colonel's mind was filled with sterner thoughts than those of Nature. At length, master and man came into tidewater and crossed a ferry of the Pamunkey, a branch of York River. As the boat reached the southern side of the river, a gentleman rode up and accosted the colonel.

"How do you do, Colonel Washington?" he said.

"How do you do, Mr. Chamberlayne," returned the young man, his face aglow with pleasure, for the gentleman was an old friend. "I am glad to see you."

"And I you, sir," returned Mr. Chamberlayne heartily. "Colonel, I saw you coming, and rode down to meet you. Dinner is waiting at the house; come and dine with us."

"I am sorry, sir," answered Washington regretfully, "but urgent business calls me to Williamsburg, and I must not tarry."

"Nonsense! a man must eat, sir. Come and dine at least. You may leave immediately afterward."

In vain Washington pleaded his impatience to despatch his business. Mr. Chamberlayne, the soul of hospitality and kindness, would hear of no excuse. At length, Washington consented to stop for dinner only. With this agreement they proceeded to the mansion of Mr. Chamberlayne.

A burst of song swelled the throats of the red birds and the orioles in the boxwood hedge and the magnolias as Washington entered the Colonial house whose halls breathed welcome. A number of guests were assembled, the most of whom were known to the young man. He responded to their greetings cordially, even gayly, throwing off the gravity which usually sat upon him. Just as he was about to reply to a sally from his host, he heard the voice of Mrs. Chamberlayne say:

"Martha, I wish to present Colonel Washington to you. Mrs. Custis, Colonel Washington."

The young colonel found himself bowing before a petite, hazel-eyed woman, garbed in a gown of white dimity, with a cluster of May-blossoms at her belt, and a little white widow's cap half covering her soft brown hair. As the little woman sank into a deep courtesy she glanced up; their eyes met, and Washington knew that the one woman stood before him. He took her out to dinner, and lingered by her side afterward, his impatience, even his business itself well-nigh forgotten.

Punctual to his orders Bishop, tall and militaire as his master, brought round the horses after dinner for an early departure. He was surprised and shocked that his master did not appear. Never before had he known him to loiter in the path of duty. Deaf to all entreaties from Mr. Chamberlayne to put up the animals, he led them up and down the gravelled walk in front of the house until he grew tired, and the horses pawed and sniffed with impatience. At length, at nightfall, the young warrior made a hasty adieu and tore himself from the side of the charming lady. His host stopped him at the door.

"No guest ever leaves my house after sunset, Colonel," he said.

Never was a prohibition more welcome. The horses were

stabled, and Washington remained for the night. The next morning he proceeded to Williamsburg with a new happiness in his heart for the lady seemed to be as much attracted to him as he was to her.

Mrs. Custis was twenty-six, about three months younger than Washington, and had two children. She had been married when but seventeen to Daniel Parke Custis who was much older than she, and had been a widow for three years. She resided at " The White House," near William's ferry, in New Kent County, and when Washington's business at Williamsburg was finished, according to an agreement between them, he found his way thither.

The wooing progressed rapidly. When the young colonel returned to his military duties he carried her promise with him, and was happy. An engagement ring was ordered from Philadelphia, and the marriage was arranged to take place as soon as the campaign against Fort Duquesne was at an end.

It was June, and time for action was slipping away. But General Forbes was detained in Philadelphia by illness, and there seemed naught to do but to grow weary with waiting. Finally, to his great relief, orders came to march to Fort Cumberland. He arrived there on the 2nd of July, and proceeded to open a road between that post and Raystown, where the headquarters of Colonel Bouquet, in command of the advance division of General Forbes's army, was stationed. His troops were so scantily prepared with regimental clothing, and the weather so oppressively warm that Washington conceived the idea of equipping them with the light hunting garb of the Indian. Two companies were fitted out in this manner, and sent to headquarters. The idea met with instant approval from

Colonel Bouquet, and he immediately adopted the dress for some of his own troops.

It was Washington's intention to leave the service at the close of this campaign, so he had proposed himself to the electors of Frederick County as their representative in the House of Burgesses. The election was to take place on the 24th of July, and he was importuned by his friends to attend it. Hearing of the matter Colonel Bouquet gave him leave of absence, but Washington declined to absent himself from his post for the furtherance of his private interests. Consequently, Colonel James Wood, known as the founder of Winchester, took the matter in charge to such effect that Washington was elected by a large majority.

In the last week of July tidings came that the expedition under General Amherst had been crowned with success. The strong town of Louisberg had been reduced, and possession gained of the Island of Cape Breton. The second expedition under General Abercrombie against Ticonderoga, however, had failed. To offset this, Colonel Bradstreet had proceeded against Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario, and was successful in obtaining its capitulation. As this was a stronghold of the French, and a magazine of supplies for the more southern posts, among which was Fort Duquesne, its capture was of immense importance in the reduction of that place. The intelligence of these movements increased Washington's impatience at the delay of the expedition with which he was connected.

And now to his amazement he learned that the road opened up by Braddock was not to be taken in this expedition, but a new one was to be made through the heart of Pennsylvania, from Raystown to Fort Duquesne. Washington protested vigorously against this. Time was passing, and the season

for going over the mountains and through the wilderness was well advanced. By taking Braddock's road, which needed but few repairs, the whole campaign might be over by the middle of October. However, his protests were of no avail, and it was decided to open up the new road. The British officers were fearful of Braddock's road. Loyally Washington seconded the movement he had not advised. It was the act of a soldier to do so.

September found him still at Fort Cumberland. His scouts brought him word of the weakness of Duquesne, for the entire force of the garrison in the middle of August did not exceed eight hundred men. An early campaign would have had the place captured by this time. At last, he received orders from General Forbes to join him at Raystown where he had just arrived. He consulted Washington about frontier warfare, and adopted a plan drawn out by him for the march of the army; and an order of battle when the troops should appear before Duquesne.

It was now the middle of September, and frosts were changing the face of nature upon the mountains. Despite the fact that a large force of men had been engaged in opening the new military road they had not advanced above forty-five miles to a place called Loyal Hannon. Colonel Bouquet halted here to establish a post.

Several times the colonel had proposed to Washington to make an irruption into the enemy's country, but Washington disapproved of sending forward detachments in advance of the main body of the army. "Such a detachment," he observed, "could not be sent without a cumbersome train of supplies which would discover it to the enemy, who must at that time be collecting his whole force at Duquesne; the enterprise, there-

fore, would be likely to terminate in a miscarriage, if not in the destruction of the party."

In spite of this warning, however, and the fact that Duquesne was distant fifty miles from Loyal Hannon, Colonel Bouquet was tempted, and sent Major Grant with eight hundred men forward to reconnoitre the French fort. The major exceeded his instructions, behaved imprudently, and provoked an attack from the enemy. His force was cut to pieces with the exception of a small remnant. These were saved by Captain Bullitt, an officer of the Virginia forces, who charged the enemy and covered the retreat of the few survivors. It took the British long to learn the lesson that border warfare differed from European.

A wet October delayed the English, but at length the main body of the army received orders to advance from Raystown. At his own request Washington led the advance, with instructions to clear the road, and guard against surprise by the enemy. The road was " indescribably bad," [1] and frost and snow already announced the approach of winter. Loyal Hannon was not reached until the 5th of November. The troops were dispirited; they were ill-clad, surrounded by a wilderness of forests, and still fifty miles distant from Fort Duquesne. A council of war was held, and, as Washington had feared, it was decided to give over the advance of the army for that season, and either to winter on the ground, or to retreat. Opportunely, however, three French prisoners were brought in who reported that the garrison was in such a weak condition from the defection of the Indians and the lack of supplies that a single well-directed blow would accomplish its fall. Accordingly, it was decided to push forward with but a light train of artillery.

[1] Letter of Washington to Governor Fauquier.

Animated by the prospect of success the march was made with as much speed as the condition of the weather and roads would permit, Washington still in the advance. On the 25th of November they arrived in sight of Fort Duquesne, advancing with great caution. To their great surprise when they came close they found the fort a smoking ruin. The commander had evacuated it the night before, and, after blowing up his magazines and setting fire to the fort, had retreated down the Ohio in batteaux. With great satisfaction Washington with his Virginians marched in, and placed the British flag on the yet smoking ruins.

After taking possession of the fort General Forbes repaired the works, and gave it the name of Fort Pitt, in honor of the British Prime Minister. Two hundred of Washington's men were left as a garrison. Treaties were concluded with the Indian tribes on the Ohio, and then the forces marched back to the settlements.

The downfall of the French fort brought peace and security to the frontier, as Washington had foreseen. So he soon after resigned his commission, and retired to Mount Vernon to prepare for an event of much importance—his marriage to Mrs. Custis.

January 6th, 1759, dawned clear, crisp, and glistening; a glorious day, flooding the little capital of Williamsburg with crystalline light. An extra glint of brightness fell athwart the weather-vane of old St. Peter's, for at this edifice the wedding was to take place, the White House, the home of Mrs. Custis, being but a few miles distant.

The renown of the bridegroom, and the beauty and wealth of the bride made the event one of great importance in the community. As the day advanced there was a perceptible move-

ment toward the church. The bell in the belfry sent out joyful peals as a brilliant wedding party gathered in the little church. There came the new governor, Francis Fauquier, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, and British from head to foot; British officers, red-coated and gold-laced, and all the gentry from far and wide.

Washington made a handsome and imposing bridegroom. He lacked but few weeks of being twenty-seven years of age, and his stately young figure looked every inch a soldier in his civilian dress. He was garbed in a suit of blue cloth, the coat lined with red silk and ornamented with silver trimmings. His waistcoat was of white satin, embroidered, and gold buckles were on his shoes and at his knees, and his hair was powdered. A straight dress sword hung by his side. A gallant, youthful figure, brilliant in color and manly in form, awaiting the dainty lady who joined him at the altar, leaning upon the arm of her father, Colonel John Dandridge.

She was very fair, and very lovely in a gown of heavy corded white silk with threads of silver interwoven through it; the overskirt looped back with white satin ribbons brocaded in leaf pattern, disclosing a white satin quilted petticoat. Her shoes were of white satin also; dainty high heeled affairs with diamond buckles. Point-lace ruffles finished the neck of her gown and her sleeves, and pearls were twined in her soft brown hair. She looked very tiny beside the tall bridegroom.[1]

As the marriage ceremony progressed the earnest gray-blue eyes of Washington never left her face, and happiness beamed in his glance and movement. With the ending of the prayer of the Reverend Mr. Mossum, the long and happy married life of George and Martha Washington began.

[1] Mrs. Ellet, "Women of the Revolution."

On leaving the church, the bride and her three bridesmaids rode back to the White House in a coach drawn by six horses and guided by black boys in livery; while Washington, mounted upon a magnificent horse richly caparisoned, rode beside it followed by all the gentlemen of the party. The most imposing figure of the gay cavalcade, however, was Bishop, the negro servant who had led Washington's horse up and down the gravelled path in front of Mr. Chamberlayne's door while his master lingered within. He was garbed in the scarlet uniform of a soldier of King George's army, and was booted and spurred.

For three months after the wedding Washington lived with his bride at "The White House," settling her affairs, and arranging for the removal of the family to Mount Vernon. During this time the House of Burgesses convened, and as he had been elected a member from Frederick County the July previous, he went to Williamsburg to take his seat.

It had been determined in the House that he should be met by fit recognition of his distinguished services. The Speaker had been instructed to make the address, thanking him on behalf of the Colony for the success of his military administration. As soon, therefore, as he had taken his seat Mr. Robinson in obedience to this order discharged the duty with so much warmth and enthusiasm that Washington was completely overwhelmed. He rose to reply; blushed, stammered, trembled, and could not utter a word.

"Sit down, Mr. Washington," said the Speaker with a smile, "your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

CHAPTER XV

From Out of a Clear Sky

THE year of Washington's marriage marked also the virtual ending of the long struggle between France and England. Ticonderoga and Crown Point were captured by General Amherst; Provincials and friendly Indians under General Prideaux took Niagara; and Quebec capitulated to General Wolfe; a victory distinguished by the deaths of that brave officer and the gallant Montcalm. Though peace was not formally concluded until 1763, " the French had been given such a drubbing that the rest of Canada was easily conquered." [1] No longer fearing their encroachments the Colonists thought to enter upon a long period of prosperous tranquillity.

It was the beginning of a halcyon time for Washington. Soul-wearied by the warfare and hardships of the frontier he entered upon his rest with the deep content of duty done. It was spring, and all the world was abloom when he brought his wife to Mount Vernon. The place had always been dear to him, both from the fact that it had been Lawrence's home, and the memory of the happy days that he had passed there in boyhood. But never had it seemed so fair as now. It was his own home to which he came; the haven of rest where he ex-

[1] Washington letter to an English correspondent.

pected to pass the remainder of his life under his own vine and fig tree. A new delight filled him in its possession; a sense of ownership, of peace which he had never felt before. The broad Potomac sparkled and shone; the air rang with innumerable bird notes, clear and sweet, and through the leafy roof of the trees the sun showered shafts of golden light. Wealth, honor, love were his. He had everything that the heart of man could desire; and he was but twenty-seven.

He was fond of country life with its rural pleasures and pursuits, so it was with deep satisfaction that he turned to the management of plantation affairs. The mansion-house was as Lawrence had built it; four rooms on a floor, and a spacious hall running through the centre from east to west; a commodious dwelling, with all the numerous dependencies, such as kitchens, smoke-houses, workshops, stables, and negro quarters, which made a little empire of a large Virginia estate. It was delightfully situated on a wooded eminence, commanding a magnificent view of the Potomac. More than ten miles of tide water washed its shores, and several valuable fisheries appertained to the estate. Its gardens were laid out in the formal fashion of the English, and hardly one-fourth of its large extent of land was under cultivation. The rest was still wild, covered with forests, and abounding in springs and runs of water.

But Washington's campaigns had taken him away from the personal supervision of the estate for the greater part of seven years, and he found that everything had to be put into shape. As his mother had said, "There was no eye like that of the master," and it proved anxious work to set matters to rights. The plantation had to be restocked, buildings made, and even provisions of all kinds to be bought for the first few years.

But his maxim had always been to do well whatever he had to do, so he turned his attention conscientiously to the matter in hand. "He understood thoroughly every branch of farming; he was on the alert for every improvement, he rose early, worked steadily, gave to everything his personal supervision, kept his own accounts with wonderful exactness," and became the best and most prosperous planter in Virginia. The products of his estate were kept up to such a high standard of quality and quantity that any barrel of flour that bore the brand of George Washington, Mount Vernon, was exempted from the customary inspection of the West India ports.

By his marriage to Mrs. Custis, Washington became one of the richest men of the country, but if it had brought him increase of wealth it also brought increased responsibility. Mr. Custis had left much land, and forty-five thousand pounds sterling in money, to his wife and the two little children who survived him. Washington became, by special decree of the General Court, trustee and manager of the whole, and guardian of the children,—a boy six years old and a girl four, and his discharge of this trust was made with special fidelity and affection.

Under the gracious reign of its new mistress Mount Vernon became again the hospitable mansion that it had been during Lawrence's time. Free-handed, open-hearted entertainment was maintained with dignity and elegance in the cordial manner of the Virginians. Martha Washington entered heartily into her husband's love of country pursuits, and sympathized fully with his thoughts, feelings, and ideals. She was a woman qualified "to soften the hours of private life, to sweeten the cares of a Hero, and smooth the rugged paths of war." [1]

[1] Mrs. Mercy Warren.

Washington was a thoroughly simple man in all ways, but he liked to have everything of the best for his family and himself. He had a keen sense of appropriateness, and did not disregard the good things of the world. It was a matter of pride with Virginians to know how to dress, both well and in the fashion; and he would have deemed it unsuitable to his station and fortune for himself and family to be less careful in such matters than his neighbors. So clothes of latest design were brought from London for wife and children, and there was a chariot and four, with black postillions for Mrs. Washington. He himself always appeared on horseback, and his stables were filled with the best animals that Virginia could produce. Magnolia was a full blooded Arabian; and there was excellent hunting blood in Ajax, Blueskin, Valiant, and Chinkling. His hounds too were the subject of much thought, and were bred for speed and keenness. His first visit of a morning was to the stables; the next to inspect the kennels.

Being a Virginian he delighted in the chase. The hounds met three times a week in the season, sometimes at Mount Vernon, sometimes at Belvoir, sometimes at Gunston Hall. Often Lord Fairfax would come down from Greenway Court, and then the hunt would be on daily. Sometimes just he and his stepson, Jacky Custis, as John Parke Custis was called, would hunt alone.

There were times too when Washington amused himself with fishing, fowling, and duck shooting. In late winter canvasback ducks abounded about the waters of the Potomac, and the rod and the gun were often used when days were dull.

During the session of the Legislature, of which he continued to be a member, he and his wife would go to Williamsburg where there would be a round of dinners, balls, and occasional

attempts at theatricals. Often too he and Mrs. Washington would go to Annapolis, the seat of the government of Maryland, and partake of the gayeties which prevailed there during the session of the Assembly. But domestic concerns and social enjoyments were not permitted to interfere with public duties. He was active in church affairs, and was prominent in the vestry, which was the seat of local government in Virginia. As judge of the County Court he had numerous calls upon his time, and fulfilled every trust laid upon him with scrupulous fidelity. With other men of enterprise he engaged in a plan to drain the great Dismal Swamp in Southern Virginia, and render it capable of cultivation. With his usual zeal and hardihood he explored it on horseback and on foot, that he might personally know every part of it. In fact, Washington took part in all the " serious pursuits, in all the interests, and in every reasonable pleasure offered by the Colony."

Samuel had already married and taken up his residence in Spottsylvania, and now Betty married Colonel Fielding Lewis and went to live at Kenmore near Fredericksburg. The year of her marriage, 1760, was marked by an event of great public importance: the death of George II, and the crowning of his grandson, George III. As the first English-born sovereign of his house, speaking from birth the language of his subjects, he found a way to the hearts of many who never regarded his predecessors as other than foreign intruders. So the accession of the simple, dull, stubborn, bigoted prince took place with much rejoicing.

The years went by peacefully and pleasantly enough in the midst of rural occupations, rural amusements, and social intercourse for Washington. In 1763 tidings that the peace between England and France had been formally signed were re-

ceived. By the treaty England became mistress of Canada and the great region south of the Lakes. The England line in the west was to be the Mississippi, and in the redistribution of territory the Floridas were surrendered by Spain. In war a great debt had been piled up, and, as part of it had been incurred in defense of America, England now resolved that the Colonies should bear part of the cost. The Colonies themselves had incurred burdensome debts in the struggle. They had cheerfully taxed themselves, and contributed men, money, and provisions for the contest. They were hardly in a position to pay taxes, having not yet recovered from the effects of the late war. In spite of all these things they would doubtless have voted what they could had His Majesty called upon them to do so. Instead, a direct system of taxation was resolved upon by Parliament, and voting that it was "just and necessary that a revenue be raised in America," in March, 1764, they passed an act to secure duties on molasses, coffee, French and East India goods; and forbade iron and lumber to be exported except to England. In addition, measures were taken to enforce rigidly the Acts of Trade.

For many years England had governed her Colonies harshly, and in a spirit of selfishness. "America was ruled, not for her own good, but for the good of English commerce. She was not allowed to export her goods except to England. No foreign ship might enter her ports. Woollen goods were not allowed to be sent from one colony to another. The manufacture of hats was forbidden, and also iron-works. The Bible was not allowed to be printed in America." Like a bolt from the blue this new blow came upon the Colonies. There was a general outburst of indignation. In Virginia the universal public sentiment was that the claim was illegal and oppressive. Time

out of mind the House of Burgesses had regulated the affairs of the Colony, and their right to do so had been formally recognized by the Stuart kings. When, therefore, the advisers of George III proclaimed the new doctrine, they did so in violation of the engagements of his predecessors, and substituted his will for the chartered rights of the Virginia people.

They were royalists and Church of England people, but their action was prompt. As soon as tidings were received of the action of Parliament, the House of Burgesses met and sent a memorial to King and Parliament. "Amidst very proper phrasing of loyalty and affection," they plainly declared it the opinion of His Majesty's subjects in Virginia that such acts were in flat violation of their undoubted rights and liberties; and the committee by which the memorial was drawn up contained the names of almost every man of chief consequence in the counsels of the Colony. And Virginia was not alone; protests went also from every other Colony of the thirteen; but to no avail.

They were all disregarded by the King's ministers, who, in the session of March, 1765, calmly enacted further taxation. It was proposed that the Colonists should be required to use revenue stamps upon all their commercial paper, legal documents, pamphlets, and newspapers; and that, at once as a general measure of convenience and a salutary exhibition of authority, His Majesty's troops stationed in the plantations should be billeted on the people. Parliament acquiesced; the King signed it, and it became a law. The act was passed in March; it was to go into effect in November; so the plain question was before the Colonists: Were they to submit to the new law or resist it as an invasion of rights?

Washington's thoughts were exceedingly grave as he rode to

the session of the House of Burgesses which met in May to consider the question. Clear-sighted, deep-thinking, he could not but see what it might portend.

It was indeed a serious body of men who assembled in the old Capitol at Williamsburg that May morning. Stately and courteous, Speaker Robinson took his seat on the dais under a red canopy supported by a gilded rod, the clerk beneath with the mace lying on the table before him to indicate that the Assembly was in full session. The members, ranged in long rows, were the most eminent men in Virginia. Their thoughtful countenances denoted that they felt the weightiness of the issue before them. On one side was submission to wrong; on the other collision with England. To openly resist the Crown would be to invite coercion; that meant war. The general sentiment was in favor of further remonstrance and memorials; but there were a few who boldly counseled plain speaking as men demanding their rights, and determined to have them.

In the midst of the general doubt and hesitation there rose a young man, about twenty-nine years of age, tall in figure but stooping, with a grim expression, small blue eyes which held a peculiar twinkle. He wore a brown wig without powder, a "peach-blossom coat," leather knee-breeches, and yarn stockings. Ungainly, even uncouth in looks, the aristocratic members surveyed him with surprise. It was the new member from Louisa County, Patrick Henry.

"Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House," he began falteringly. "I beg to offer some resolutions for your consideration." Then from a scrap of paper torn from the fly leaf of an old law book he read as follows:

"First: The original settlers of Virginia brought with them

and transmitted to their posterity all the privileges, franchises, and immunities enjoyed by the people of Great Britain.

"Second: These privileges, franchises, and immunities were secured to the aforesaid Colonists by two royal charters granted by King James.

"Third: Taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves, is the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution of the realm itself could not exist.

"Fourth: His Majesty's liege people of this most ancient Colony have always enjoyed the right of being governed by their own Assembly in the articles of taxes, and this right has constantly been recognized by the King and people of Great Britain.

"Therefore, be it resolved, that His Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this Colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatever designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the General Assembly aforesaid; and any person who shall by speaking or writing, assert or maintain the contrary shall be deemed an enemy of His Majesty's Colony."

There was a hubbub of excitement as Henry sat down. "The boldest were astonished; the timid were alarmed; the loyal few were amazed and indignant."[1] Many even uttered threats, and those who were willing to submit, abused Mr. Henry without stint. A violent debate ensued. The meeting was in a turmoil and no one could tell what might happen. The Burgesses prided themselves upon their loyalty to the King. They had intended opposition, but not defiance. Many of them denounced the resolutions as dangerous to the

[1] "Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry."

public welfare. They were sound men of affairs, and sought to check Henry in his revolutionary course.

Again Henry took the floor, his energies aroused to their full majesty and might. In the midst of his harangue, he exclaimed: "Cæsar had his Brutus—Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third ——"

"Treason!" shouted Speaker Robinson excitedly.

"Treason! Treason!" echoed from every part of the House.

Henry did not falter, but continued undauntedly: "And George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it."

In spite of all opposition the resolutions passed the Burgesses,—the last by one majority. The passionate eloquence of the young county court lawyer had committed the great Colony of Virginia to resistance.

In Henry's absence the next day the resolutions were reconsidered and modified, and the fifth one stricken out, but they were still seditious enough for Governor Fauquier to exercise his prerogative as chief magistrate, and dissolve the Assembly, ordering a new election. As a man he sympathized with the Virginians, but as the King's representative he was obliged to use his power to suppress disloyalty in any form. The dissolution, however, was of little avail, as the people immediately reelected the friends of the resolutions, and filled the seats of their opposers with those known to favor them.

With deep concern Washington had witnessed the agitated scene in the House. He was no debater, and seldom spoke in public, but perhaps there was no man who realized more clearly than he the seriousness of the crisis. He foresaw that if England persisted in the folly of enforcing the Stamp Act, a

violent struggle with the mother country must surely follow, and upon the dissolution of the Assembly went home with many anxious thoughts for the future.

He found the Fairfaxes, broad and liberal minded as they were, in full sympathy with the Crown. George Mason, however, his neighbor at Gunston Hall, one of the ablest men in Virginia, fully participated in the popular feeling, and the two conferred together often concerning the political outlook.

"The Stamp Act engrosses the conversation of the speculative part of the Colonists," wrote Washington to his wife's uncle, Francis Dandridge, at this time in London. "They look upon this unconstitutional method of taxation as a direful attack upon their liberties, and loudly exclaim against their violation."

Indeed the agitation was universal. The eloquence of Henry seemed to have touched every heart, and his resolutions ran like wild-fire through the Colonies. Within a fortnight after they went abroad Massachusetts invited the other Colonies to meet in a general representative Congress at New York. Governor Fauquier refused to call the Assembly together for the purpose of appointing delegates thereto; so, confiding in the integrity and patriotism of the other Colonies, the members elect signed a letter to the Congress, in which they promised to acquiesce in any action that might be had. The Congress drew up a Declaration of Rights and Immunities, and sent resolutions to England which arrested the attention of the world. An address to the King, and a petition to both Houses of Parliament, praying for redress, were included. Similar petitions were forwarded by the Colonies not represented in the Congress.

The Act was to go into effect November 1st, and the very

preparations for its enforcement called forth popular tumult in various places. Throughout the Colonies stamp distributors were burned in effigy, and by the time the day arrived no stamped paper was anywhere in evidence; all had been either destroyed or concealed. "All transactions which required stamps to give them validity were suspended, or were executed by private compact. The courts of justice were closed, until at length some conducted their business without stamps." The merchants of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and such other Colonies as had ventured to oppose the Stamp Act, agreed to import no more British manufactures unless it should be repealed. The pressure was more than the British ministry could stand. They gave way at last, and repealed the act, March 18th, 1766. It came to America like a great deliverance.

Washington was in Williamsburg when the news came, for the Burgesses were in session. Everywhere the people went wild with joy over their triumph. The little capital was brilliantly illuminated at night, and huge bonfires were lighted. In the Assembly an address of thanks was voted to be sent to King and Parliament, and it was also voted to erect a statue to George III, by way of expressing their high sense of his attention to the rights and petitions of his people. It seemed as though the people could not do enough to express their gratitude; so great a load had been lifted from their hearts. It was pathetic.

Washington and Patrick Henry sat near each other while the matter of a statue for the King was being discussed.

"Colonel," spoke the latter in a low tone, "did you remark the wording of the repeal? In the last clause it distinctly asserts the right 'to bind the Colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever.'"

"Yes, Mr. Henry," returned Washington gravely. "But let us hope that it was inserted merely to 'save the faces of the ministers,' as the saying is. Had Parliament resolved upon enforcing the Stamp Act, the consequences, I conceive, would have been more direful than is generally apprehended, both to the mother country and her Colonies. All, therefore, who were instrumental in procuring the repeal are entitled to the thanks of every British subject, and have mine cordially."

CHAPTER XVI

Gathering Clouds

IT was with relieved mind that Washington returned to Mount Vernon, and devoted himself to matters of private and public interests. He had little time for leisure: his brothers were all married, and in addition to his many duties he had taken charge of his aging mother's financial affairs. So life went on in the old way; a wholesome, manly, many-sided life that kept Washington young and strong, both physically and mentally. But whatever joy he felt in the repeal of the Stamp Act was short-lived.

In the very next year, 1767, taxes were levied on tea, paints, paper, glass, and lead, imported into the Colonies, for the purpose of paying fixed salaries to the Crown's officers in the Colonies; and the contested ground was all to go over again. And because the Colony of New York refused to make provision for troops quartered upon her Parliament suspended the legislative powers of her Assembly. Presently they created a custom-house and established a board of Revenue Commissions for America, to have its seat at Boston.

When intelligence of these acts reached America, the excitement was as great as that produced by the Stamp Act. The House of Burgesses broke into fresh protests and remon-

strances at its next session, as it was free to do without hindrance, for Governor Fauquier had died, and John Blair, a Virginian and President of the Council, was acting governor until the arrival of the new incumbent, Lord Botetourt. Then came news that so many commotions and altercations had taken place between the King's officers and the people in Massachusetts Bay Colony, two regiments had been landed in Boston to bring reason to its inhabitants through the muzzles of musketry and cannon. Excitement ran high throughout the Provinces, and they glowed with sympathy for Massachusetts, and sent her assurances of support.

As non-importation had helped to accomplish the repeal of the Stamp Act, the merchants of Boston, Salem, Connecticut, New York and Philadelphia entered into an agreement to suspend the importation of any of the taxed articles. Washington was emphatic in his support of this measure, and advocated its adoption in Virginia. He talked the matter over with George Mason.

"At a time when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke, and maintain the liberty we have derived from our ancestors, Mr. Mason," he declared. "But what shall we do to answer the purpose effectually, is the question. Addresses and remonstrances to the throne and Parliament have proved inefficient. To adopt the non-importation scheme is, in my opinion, a good plan, and must be attended with salutary effects, provided it can be carried pretty generally into execution. And if we do not adopt non-importation, what is there left us but a resort to arms; yet that should be the last resource—the *dernier ressort.*"

"Our all is at stake," concurred Mr. Mason. "The little conveniences and comforts of life, when set in competition with our liberty, ought to be rejected, not with reluctance, but with pleasure. Yet it is plain that, in the tobacco colonies, a plan of this kind must be adapted to our circumstances; for, if not steadily executed, it had better have remained unattempted. Our supplying our mother country with gross materials, and taking her manufactures in return, is the true chain of connection between us. If these bands are not broken by oppression they must long hold us together."

"True," agreed Washington. "Therefore, whatever America can do to lessen imports, and distress the various trades and manufactures of Great Britain will awaken the attention of Parliament to the rights and interests of these Colonies as nothing else can do. But in what manner shall we reach the people? We have no large towns, and to enter into such an agreement will have to be the individual act of each person. How shall we reach them, Mr. Mason?"

"Let us think it over, and try to concert some plan, Colonel," suggested Mr. Mason. And so it was agreed between them.

Meantime, the new governor, Lord Botetourt, had arrived in Williamsburg. His opening of the session of the Burgesses was in the style of the royal opening of Parliament. The Bostonians were to be brought to reason by military force; the Virginians were to be dazzled by a reflex of regal splendor. So my lord proceeded to the Capitol from his dwelling, in a coach given to him by the King, drawn by six milk-white horses. Having delivered his speech according to royal form he returned home with the same state.

But the Virginians were not dazzled. They proceeded at once to begin the battle for their rights, passing spirited resolu-

tions, protesting against the transportation of citizens of any Colony for trial, and maintaining the exclusive right of the Assembly to impose taxes.

The new governor was astonished and dismayed at these high-toned proceedings, and the next day he dissolved them. The Burgesses adjourned to a private house, elected Peyton Randolph moderator, and proceeded with business. The late decrees of Parliament had to be met. Washington now brought forward a draft of the articles of agreement concerted between him and Mr. Mason. It was unanimously adopted. Each member signed it, and it was printed and circulated for the signatures of the people.

There were those who lapsed from the agreement, but Washington adhered to it rigidly. In this he was ably seconded by his wife. All the members of the household were attired in homespun that she might do her part toward starving the English trades and manufactures; and sixteen spinning wheels were kept humming busily all day, while her deft fingers wove threads and patriotism into the cloth.

And in the meantime, the Virginians were growing to esteem their new governor. His lordship laid aside his semi-royal equipage and state, and by his conciliatory conduct allayed the popular ferment. He examined into public grievances; and became a strenuous advocate for the repeal of taxes; and, " authorized by his despatches from the ministry, assured the public that such repeal would soon take place. His assurances were received with implicit faith, and for a time Virginia was quieted."

While matters rested on this basis Washington made another expedition to the Ohio. He was one of the Virginia Board of Commissioners, appointed, at the close of the late war, to

settle the military accounts. A grant of two hundred thousand acres of the western lands had been promised by the government to those who enlisted for the War against the French and Indians in 1754; but nothing had ever been done to fulfill the promise, and Washington became the agent for the soldiers in the business. Early in 1770, therefore, he went once more to the wilderness, selecting proper tracts for the grant along the banks of the Ohio.

It was a two-months' journey, and not without some degree of danger attached to it. The savages treated him with great deference, but he noted a restlessness among them that gave him some uneasiness. On his return he did not rest until the claims were adjusted satisfactorily to the soldiers. It was well to hurry; for matters had darkened ominously while he was away, and no man knew what a day might bring forth.

The non-importations associations being generally observed throughout the Colonies produced the effect that Washington had anticipated. Parliament was importuned by British merchants to intervene to save them from ruin. In answer to their petitions Lord North, who had recently come into the King's cabinet as Premier, revoked all duties laid in 1767, excepting that on tea. This single tax being continued to maintain the Parliamentary right of taxation. "A total repeal," declared his lordship, "cannot be thought of until America is prostrate at our feet."

The Colonists were in no mood to assume such an humble attitude. One tax was as bad as a hundred. It was not the taxes themselves they were fighting, but the right of Parliament to tax them at all. So, while resuming the consumption of those articles on which the duty was removed at their convenience, they rigidly continued the disuse of tea. New England

was particularly earnest in the matter, and with reason. On the very day that the ominous bill was passed in Parliament there had been trouble in Boston between some young men and the troops. The matter came to blows, in which the troops were assailed with clubs and stones. They retaliated by firing upon the people, killing four persons, and wounding several others. General Gage, who had declared that he could restore order in Massachusetts with five regiments, was finding that he had his hands full.

In Virginia the public discontent burst forth with more violence than ever. Lord Botetourt also felt deeply grieved that he had been led into making false promises by the ministry, and wrote home demanding his discharge. Before it arrived, an attack of fever, combined with worry and chagrin, laid him in his grave. He was the best loved of all the royal governors, for he had tried to render every just and reasonable service to the people that he could.

He was succeeded by William Nelson, President of the Council, and he, two years later, by John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, a very unprepossessing person. He brought a soldier with him for secretary and confidential adviser, and seemed resolved to crush the spirit of rebellion without being disposed to recoil from any means whatever to accomplish that object. He summoned the Burgesses at once to meet him upon his coming, and then was careful not to convene them again until March, 1773, though he had promised to call them together earlier.

In the midst of these many pressing affairs Washington all at once found himself obliged to occupy himself with the details of the education of his stepson, John Parke Custis. Mrs. Washington was a fond mother; one who indulged and petted

her boy too much for his own good. He was lively, impulsive, and possessed of an independent fortune in his own right. He was more given to sports and pleasures than to study, so that, although he had had many advantages, his education had not progressed as it ought to have done. Under such circumstances, Washington had found his guardianship a delicate and difficult task.

The lad had been placed under the charge of the Rev. Jonathan Bouchier, an Episcopalian clergyman residing in Annapolis. When Washington returned from the Ohio he found that between them they had made a plan for Jacky to travel abroad with Mr. Bouchier, though he was scarcely sixteen years of age; an agreeable arrangement, especially for the teacher, as the rector had made his charges so high that half the boy's income would have been anticipated to meet them.

Quietly Washington had the travel scheme postponed until the boy might be better prepared to benefit by its advantages. A year had scarcely elapsed ere the lad's fancy had taken a new direction. He was in love; engaged to the object of his affection, and on the road to matrimony.

The match was highly satisfactory to all parties, but it was agreed between Benedict Calvert, the young lady's father, and Washington that it was expedient for the youth to pass a year or two at college. Accordingly he accompanied him to New York, and placed him under the care of the Rev. Dr. Cooper, president of King's College,[1] to pursue his studies in that institution. It may be said in passing, that the period of probation proved too long for the youthful lovers, and Jacky was married to Eleanor Calvert the following February.

Washington returned from New York in time for the session

[1] Now Columbia University.

of the Burgesses, convened at last by Lord Dunmore. They were eager to avail themselves of this long-wished opportunity to legislate upon the general affairs of the Colonies. Parliament had asserted in stronger terms than ever the right to transport accused persons to England for trial, and the House renewed its protest against the act. One of its most important measures was the appointment of eleven persons, "whose business it should be to obtain the most clear and authentic intelligence of all such acts of Parliament, or ministry, as may affect the rights of the Colonies, and to maintain with their sister Colonies a correspondence and communication."

Their proceedings were cut short by Lord Dunmore at this point, for he promptly dissolved them. The Committee of Correspondence met the next day, however, and sent a circular letter containing the resolutions to the speakers of the several Colonial Assemblies. The plan of correspondence was generally adopted throughout the Provinces, and proved a strong link of union.

Upon the dissolution of the Burgesses Washington returned to Mount Vernon to find a great grief awaiting him. Patsy Custis, as Martha Custis—his wife's daughter—was called, was dying. Washington was the only father she had ever known, and a very tender attachment existed between them. For sometime she had been in a state of decline, and the object of extreme solicitude to both her mother and stepfather. She was a sweet, gentle maiden, of great comfort to her mother, who had made a constant companion of her.

And now this well beloved daughter was dying. Washington was not a man given to outbursts of grief, but upon this occasion his self-command forsook him. Kneeling by her bedside he prayed earnestly for her recovery. It was not to be.

She expired on the 19th of June in the seventeenth year of her age. Washington gave what consolation he could to his wife, and strove to assuage his own grief by plunging more deeply into public affairs. And action was quickening.

As the year waned the English government undertook to force cargoes of the East India Company's tea into Colonial ports. This brought matters to a crisis. " One sentiment, one determination, pervaded the whole continent. Taxation was to receive its definite blow. Whoever submitted to it was an enemy to his country." From New York and Philadelphia the ships were sent back, unladen, to London. In Charlestown the tea was unloaded, and stored away in cellars and other places, where it perished. At Boston the action was more decisive. Because the governor would not give a passport to the ships to clear the fort, and so return to London, some of the inhabitants, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships, broke open all the chests of tea, and emptied their contents into the harbor. Incensed by this overt act Parliament passed acts giving dangerous increase of power to the governor of Massachusetts, and directed that the Port of Boston be closed to all commerce on and after the first day of June.

News of this action had not reached Virginia when the Burgesses assembled in May. Lady Dunmore, and a numerous family of sons and daughters, had recently arrived, and one of the first measures of the House was an address of congratulation to the governor upon her coming. It was followed by an agreement among the members to give her ladyship a ball on the 27th of the month.

The motion to this effect had scarcely been passed when there was a commotion in the corridor without the chamber, and the door opened to admit an express. In his hand he waved

a letter, and so swiftly had he come that he could only gasp:

"An Express; from Boston."

"Take the letter and read it," directed the Speaker to the clerk.

"Gentlemen," faltered the clerk as he glanced over the missive, "'tis bad news. The Port of Boston is to be closed June first, and we are forbidden to have any intercourse with her until she comes to her senses. And the troops are to be billeted in the houses of the citizens. Further, the transportation of citizens to England to be tried for any misdemeanor is insisted upon. Further still, Canada is given a score of privileges if she remains loyal. All the vast territories between the lakes and the Ohio and the Mississippi are to be given Quebec as a price for her fidelity. There is more, but ——"

"It is enough," shouted Thomas Jefferson. "The lands we fought and bled for to be given to Quebec? Gentlemen, it is too much."

"The cause of Massachusetts is the cause of Virginia," spoke Richard Henry Lee solemnly. "Boston to-day; to-morrow this Province. Where will it end?"

And so spoke all. The Burgesses were wrought up to the highest pitch of indignation. All other business was thrown aside, and this became the sole subject of discussion. A protest against this and other recent acts of Parliament was entered upon the journal of the House, and a resolution adopted setting apart the first day of June as a day of fasting and prayer,—prayer that civil war might be averted, and the people of America united in one cause. As soon as Lord Dunmore heard of their action he dissolved them.

The Burgesses received the dissolution in silence, and im-

mediately adjourned to the long room of the Raleigh Tavern. There they passed resolutions denouncing the Boston Port Bill as a dangerous attempt to destroy the liberties of all the Colonies; recommending their countrymen to desist from the use of all kinds of East India commodities; urging a Congress of all the Colonies, and calling a Convention for Virginia to meet at that place on the first day of August to take action for the Colony.

Before the action of the Virginia legislature was known Massachusetts had passed a resolution to the same effect. The measure met with the general concurrence of the Colonies, and the fifth day of September, next ensuing, was fixed upon for the first Congress, which was to meet at Philadelphia.

No spleen was shown toward the governor for his dissolution of them by the Burgesses. Washington dined with him on the evening of the very day of the dissolution, spent the evening at the palace, and rode out with him to his farm on the following morning where they breakfasted. The ball which had been decreed in honor of Lady Dunmore was celebrated on the 27th with unwavering gallantry. It was over at last, and the former Burgesses went away to consider more serious matters.

The 1st of June was ushered in by the tolling of bells, and was observed by all patriots as a day of fasting and prayer. Washington, who was detained in Williamsburg on business, rigidly observed it, and attended the services appointed to be held in the Bruton Church.

Shortly after his return to Mount Vernon, in the latter part of June, he presided as moderator at a meeting of the inhabitants of Fairfax County, called to ascertain the views of the people. A series of resolutions were passed which made a

thorough and radical statement of the whole difficulty with the Crown. They included the usual ones for self-government and against the vindictive measures exerted against Massachusetts; recommended the most perfect union and coöperation among the Colonies, and solemn covenants with respect to non-importation; and urged that a dutiful petition and remonstrance should be sent from the Congress to the King, declaring their attachment to his person, family, and government, and their desire to continue in dependence upon Great Britain; beseeching him not to reduce his faithful subjects in America to desperation, and to reflect, that *from our sovereign there can be but one appeal.* These resolutions stated the case so exactly that they had a wide circulation in America and in England. "The King's ministers were startled by their significance." [1]

Washington presented them to the Convention which met at Williamsburg on the first of August, making at the same time a passionate speech.

"He was ready," he declared, "to raise one thousand men, subsist them at his own expense, and march at their head to the relief of Boston."

This met an answering response from the members. Their fighting spirit was rising. Everything was to be tried to adjust matters peaceably, but it was becoming apparent what the ultimate appeal would be. Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton, all foremost men of the Colony, were chosen delegates to represent the people of Virginia in the General Congress.

The night before they were to set out for Philadelphia, Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton came to Mount Vernon

[1] Bancroft.

to spend the night with Washington. There was much discussion in the evening, both of a royalistic and patriotic nature, for Bryan Fairfax, of Tarlston Hall, a younger brother of George William, joined them. He was a man of liberal sentiments, but attached to the ancient rule, and much distressed at the course of Virginia. He advised a petition to the throne, which would give Parliament an opportunity to repeal the offensive acts.

"But what have we done but petition?" asked Washington. "Has anything been gained by it? Is not the attack against the liberty and property of the people of Boston self-evident proof that there is a regular and systematic plan to fix the right and practice of taxation upon us? Shall we whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we sit supinely, and see one province after another fall a sacrifice to despotism?"

Bryan Fairfax turned to Mrs. Washington who was moving quietly and unobtrusively among her guests serving refreshments. She had taken no part in the talk, but had listened closely.

"How do you feel about the matter, Mrs. Washington?" he asked. "Surely you are not in sympathy with sedition?"

"I believe that George is right, sir," she answered lifting her soft eyes to her husband. "He says that there are taxes in which we have no voice. Under such circumstances, what course can virtuous men take than has been taken? But here is sangaree and cake, gentlemen. There is no tax on either, so we may partake of them with right good will."

There was a laugh at this, and the talk drifted into other channels. Early the next morning Washington and his two guests were up to start on their journey. It was before sunup,

but Mrs. Washington was up also to see them off. She stood in the door and waved them adieu as they started.

"God be with you, gentlemen," she said.

And with this benediction the journey north began.

CHAPTER XVII

The Hour and the Man

THE journey north was made quietly enough by the three men who realized the gravity of the situation. On the morning of the 5th of September they met with their colleagues in Carpenters' Hall, Philadelphia. The men of the North and the men of the South were at last in the presence of each other. "Such an Assembly as never before came together of a sudden in any part of the world. Here were fortunes, abilities, eloquence, learning, acuteness; here was a diversity of religions, educations, manners, and interests, such as it would seem impossible to unite in one plan of conduct."[1] Never was a more memorable body of men assembled to settle the fate of a nation.

Congress was organized by the choice of Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, as president; and Charles Thomson, of Pennsylvania, as secretary. The credentials of the various delegates were then presented, passed upon, and then there came a pause. Who should take the lead? What measure should be proposed first? An awful and deep silence ensued; the members looking round upon each other, individually reluctant to open a business so fearfully momentous. This "deep and deathlike si-

[1] Letter of John Adams.

lence "[1] was beginning to become painfully embarrassing when a grave-looking member, in a plain dark suit of minister's gray and unpowdered wig arose. He looked like a country parson. He faltered at first, but his exordium was impressive; and as he launched forth into a recital of Colonial wrongs he kindled with his subject, until he poured forth such an eloquent appeal that the House was electrified.

"Who is it? Who is it?" went from lip to lip.

"It is Patrick Henry, of Virginia," was the answer from the few who knew him.[2]

"All America," cried Mr. Henry, "is thrown into one mass. Where are your landmarks—your boundaries of Colonies? They are all thrown down. The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American."

It was the key-note of union. Whatever diversity of interests there had been among them was no more; the cause of one was the cause of all. They were not Northerners, nor Southerners, but Americans. There was no more hesitation; he who had startled the people nine years before by his bold resolutions against the Stamp Act, "now gave the impulse to the representatives of that people, and set in motion the machinery of civil power."

The Congress met behind closed doors, and nothing was to be made public without special orders. Its action was calm and moderate. It was not the wish of the Colonies, "separately or collectively to set up for independence."[3] It was not rebellion but liberty they wanted. It would have taken so

[1] "Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry."
[2] "Watson's Annals," Vol. I. Related by Bishop White.
[3] Letter of Washington to Captain Mackenzie of Boston.

little to satisfy them, had their rights been respected. What was looked to was a redress of grievances; and after much debate and discussion, the delegates agreed upon a Declaration of Rights; an Address to the People of Great Britain; another to the People of the Colonies; and still another to the King, specifying the acts of Parliament passed during His Majesty's reign, infringing and violating their rights. So masterly were these papers, so full of practical talent and political wisdom, that they excited admiration even in England.

Having made provision for another Congress to meet on the 10th of May following, the first general Congress closed its session with a vote of thanks to the advocates of Colonial rights in both houses of Parliament.

It had remained in session fifty-one days. There had been a continual round of entertainment in the hospitable town, a universal exchange of courtesies, a rush of visiting and dining during which there was exchange of ideas and purposes so that Northerners and Southerners returned to their respective Provinces knowing each other better, and filled with mutual respect.

On the whole Washington was quite content with the result. The work of the Congress had followed the line of policy adopted by the Virginia Convention, and that had proceeded along the path marked out by the Fairfax resolutions. He was not an orator, or a man of words, but he had impressed himself deeply on all the delegates. He was one of those men whose qualities command respect and admiration. A man of action rather than words; yet Patrick Henry declared upon his return from the Congress, "That for solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington was unquestionably the greatest man on the floor."

So Washington returned to Mount Vernon to await events. There was much to do, both in private and public affairs. The old life with its rural pleasures, rural pursuits, and social intercourse was passing. As though to typify the beginning of the change Belvoir, the hospitable home of the Fairfaxes where he had passed so many happy hours, was burned to the ground. Colonel William Fairfax had been in England for some years; recently George William and wife had joined him. Soon after George William's departure, through some carelessness of the overseer, the house caught fire, and was totally destroyed. Yes; the old life was passing. Soon it would be no more.

In fact, a general restlessness prevailed throughout the country. Owing to measures of General Gage a semi-belligerent state of affairs existed in Massachusetts. By his orders the King's troops had secretly taken possession of a large quantity of powder in the arsenal at Charlestown, belonging to the public stores of the Colony. When the news of the seizure spread through the country several thousand of patriots assembled at Cambridge, and demanded a restitution of the powder. In reply Gage stationed the 59th regiment on Boston Neck, the only entrance to the town from the land side, with orders to entrench and fortify it. Under the auspices of a Committee of Safety and a Committee of Supplies, in which the executive powers of the Colony were vested, the militia went to arming and disciplining itself. Large quantities of military stores were collected and deposited at Concord and Worcester.

These military measures were no longer confined to New England, but extended to the middle and southern Colonies as well. The petitions of the Congress at Philadelphia were met with supercilious contempt by England. In the face of a

conciliatory bill of Chatham, proposed to Parliament with a view to redress the wrongs of America, the councils of the opposition prevailed; and further measures of a stringent nature were adopted, ruinous to the trade and fisheries of New England. Nothing wise or generous was done. Instead of concession there was fresh menace. Despairing of obtaining reconciliation Dr. Franklin, who had been in England as an agent for the Colonies, returned home. All America began to arm, and the roll of the drum was heard in every village.

There had always been a custom in Virginia for the inhabitants to maintain independent companies, equipped at their own expense, though holding themselves subject to the military law. Now in every county was a Committee of Safety and an independent company, for the avowed purpose of being employed against the government if occasion required. Hitherto they had been self-disciplined; but now they continually resorted to Washington for instruction and advice. He was frequently called upon to review these independent companies, all of which were anxious to put themselves under his command as field-officer. Not only in Fairfax County, but in counties all over the Province, and he accepted the command as often as it was offered to him. "It is my intention to devote my life and fortune to the cause we are engaged in, if needful," he wrote to John Augustine who was raising and forming a company.

At Mount Vernon a military tone was especially noticeable. Hither came Dr. Craik and Captain Hugh Mercer, his companions in the Seven Years' War, to talk over the old war, and discuss the possibility of future service. Hither, too, came General Charles Lee, and Major Horatio Gates; British officers who also had served in the French and Indian War. Both

had been disappointed of preferment in the home service, and, resigning therefrom, had recently purchased estates in Berkeley County, and taken up their residence in Virginia. As both were interested in the popular cause, their visits were extremely welcome to Washington, who esteemed the men highly for their military knowledge and experience.

So the winter passed busily, and March found Washington in Richmond to attend the second Virginia Convention. Williamsburg was no longer a safe place for rebel meetings. Men-of-war were lying in the James River, and Lord Dunmore let it be known that troops were ready to make short work of treasonable assemblies; so Richmond was chosen for the Convention.

Proceedings at first were cautious. Resolutions were passed expressing a strong desire for the return of peace, but these were coupled with resolves to encourage the manufacture of gunpowder, salt, iron, and steel. The news that Parliament was about to vote an extension to the whole country of the punitive measures hitherto directed against Massachusetts had lighted a flame from one end of the land to the other. In this Assembly, Patrick Henry advocated measures for embodying, arming, and disciplining a militia force, and providing for the defense of the Colony.

" It is useless," said he, " to address further petitions to the government, or to await the effect of those already addressed to the throne. The time for supplication is past; the time for action is at hand. We must fight, Mr. Speaker. I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left to us."

Washington was of the same opinion, and was made chairman of a committee that reported a plan for carrying those

measures into effect. "He was not an impulsive man to raise the battle-cry, but the executive man to marshal the troops into the field, and carry on the war."[1] The spirit of revolt was daily gaining strength and determination. British regiments were mustering at Boston, and America accepting this as an answer to her appeals was quietly making ready to argue the dispute with something more potent than petitions and associations.

And now suddenly the Colonies had cause for action. It was soon apparent that a preconcerted arrangement had been made to disarm all the Provinces. Lord Dunmore, obeying a general order issued by the ministry to all the provincial governors, had seized upon the stores of gunpowder belonging to the Province at Williamsburg, and removed them to the *Magdalen* man-of-war, lying in the James River. A little before daylight, on the morning of April 20th, a party of marines who had been secreted in the Governor's palace, marched silently to the Old Magazine and carried away the stores of gunpowder. When the fact was discovered soon after daylight, all Williamsburg ran to arms. A great crowd filled Gloucester Street, uttering loud threats and demanding the restoration of the powder. The minute-men hastened to arm, and more than six hundred of the Rappahannock country assembled at Fredericksburg, ready to march upon the capital, and force the restoration of the powder. They were only dissuaded from their purpose by Washington and Pendleton, who persuaded them to await the action of Congress. It had been determined by the Americans that the first act of aggression should be made by the government.

It needed but a spark to set the whole country in a blaze.

[1] Washington Irving, "Life of Washington."

Washington returned to Mount Vernon in grave mood to make arrangements to attend the second Congress which was to assemble at Philadelphia on the 10th of May. As had happened the fall before, there were guests at the mansion: Bryan Fairfax, of Tarlston Hall, and Major Horatio Gates. Also, as before, the talk was of the condition of the country, and the gathering clouds which were daily growing blacker. In the midst of the discourse, George Mason rode up, his whole countenance expressing the greatest agitation.

"Gentlemen," he cried springing from his horse, and throwing the reins to a black boy, "the blow has fallen. There has been a battle at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts Bay. Many are fallen on both sides."

"A battle!" exclaimed the three simultaneously. "Let us have the news of the matter."

"On Tuesday night, the 18th of April, a British force marched out of Boston to seize the military stores belonging to the Colony at Concord. They thought to keep their movements secret, but the alarm was given, and when they reached Lexington at daybreak they were met by some militia who opposed their progress.

"Crying, 'Disperse, ye rebels,' the regulars fired upon them, killing a number, and wounding others. The militia returned the fire, but were dispersed. Then the regulars proceeded to Concord, but the minute-men were ready for them. A skirmish took place; the British retreated ——"

"Retreated?" exclaimed Washington. "Did you say retreated, Mr. Mason?"

"Ay, sir; retreated. Retreated and closely pursued, returned to Boston. Sixty-five of the regulars were killed, one hundred and eighty were wounded, and twenty-eight were

taken prisoners. Our own side lost fifty-nine killed, thirty-nine wounded, and five missing. Letters have just been received by the Committee of Correspondence."

"And blood has been shed on both sides," exclaimed Bryan Fairfax. "Oh, the pity of it!"

"But it is war," cried Gates with sparkling eyes. "War, gentlemen; with glorious deeds to be done."

"Yes, it is war," said Washington sadly. "And the blame of this deplorable affair rests on the ministry."

"And you, George," questioned Fairfax. "Are you going to side with America against the government?"

"Yes, Bryan. The once happy and peaceful plains of America must either be drenched in blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?"

The event was decisive in its consequences. It was with the feeling that war had begun that the second Congress assembled in Philadelphia. There was much to attend to. Though there had been actual fighting, with a "lingering feeling of attachment to the mother country," a second humble and dutiful petition was to be sent to the King setting forth their reasons for resistance. A federal union was formed, leaving to each Colony the right to manage its own internal affairs, but vesting in the Congress the power of making peace or war; of entering into treaties or alliances; of regulating general commerce; in a word, of legislating on such matters as regarded the welfare and security of the whole country.

Soon after its convening, word was received that a body of bold spirits under Ethan Allen had surprised and taken the old forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain, in the "Name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Con-

gress." This won for the patriots the command of Lakes George and Champlain and threw open the highway into Canada.

The Congress was amazed at the news, and scarcely knew what to do about the matter. At length, they recommended the committees of New York and Albany to remove the cannon and the stores to the south end of Lake George, and to erect a strong post at that place. They also directed an exact inventory of the cannon and military stores to be taken, "in order," as the despatch said, "that they may be safely returned when restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies, so ardently desired by us, shall render it prudent and consistent with the over-ruling law of self-preservation."

Congress lost no time in using the sovereign powers vested in them, and proceeded to make extensive military arrangements. The militia of the various colonies, and such volunteers as could be obtained, were mustered into the service under the title of the Continental Army; and the troops which had flocked to the vicinity of Boston from all parts of New England, after the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord, and were then investing that city, were adopted and enrolled under the same title. They ordered the construction of forts in various parts of the country, the provision of arms, munitions, and military stores; while to defray the expenses of these and other measures, avowedly of self-defense, they authorized the issuing of notes to the amount of three millions of dollars, bearing the inscription of "The United Colonies"; the faith of the confederacy being pledged for their redemption.

Washington was a great deal sought after in the committees appointed for military affairs. He showed no hesitation as to what should be done, and most of the rules and regulations

for the army, and the measures devised for defence, were devised by him.

All these things were subjects of much discussion. But the chief concern was with the situation of the army before Boston. The most embarrassing question was, who should be the commander-in-chief? Military men were then in the field at the head of the army, and by common consent of the New England Colonies General Artemas Ward was the commander-in-chief. It was doubtful how the New England soldiery would take putting another in his place; but Massachusetts did not wish to stand alone. To secure the active assistance of all the other Colonies it was necessary to choose a more efficient leader, and to choose him outside of New England. John Adams, of Massachusetts, solved the difficulty, by rising in his place on the 15th of June, and proposing the adoption of the army by Congress. At the conclusion of his remarks he declared that he had but " one gentleman in mind for its command. A gentleman from Virginia who was among us, and very well known to all of us; a gentlemen whose skill and experience as an officer, whose independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character would commend the approbation of all America, and unite the cordial exertions of all the Colonies better than any other person in the union." And every one present knew that he referred to George Washington.

Washington, taken unawares, rose and slipped out of the room. There was, in truth, no soldier in America to be compared with him in fitness. The choice was inevitable. A few days later he was nominated and elected unanimously. On the opening of the session on the following morning, President Hancock communicated to him, officially, a notice of his appointment.

Rising in his place, Washington accepted the appointment with a mixture of pride and modesty "that made men love him."

"Mr. President," said he, "though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel a great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for the support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation. But, lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in this room, that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with. As to pay, sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit of it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire."

Four days later he received his commission from the President of Congress. Upon the next day, the 21st of June, he set forth for Cambridge accompanied by Charles Lee, who had been made third in command, and Philip Schuyler, one of the brigadier-generals, and a brilliant escort.

CHAPTER XVIII

Breasting a Sea of Difficulties

THE Commander-in-Chief with his escort had ridden scarcely twenty miles from Philadelphia when from out of the leafy vista of the tree-shaded road there came a rider in hot haste. Onward he advanced with a rush, without a turn of the rein; his horse white with lather, while the noise of its breathing could be heard above the clatter of its hoofs.

Both horse and rider seemed to have no eyes but for the road in front of them. As he drew near his horse stumbled; and the rider, fearing that it might sink from exhaustion, drew up and gave it a moment in which to recover itself. He himself was panting and in perspiration, and his clothes were disturbed and soiled with travel. He took off his cocked felt hat to fan himself.

"You ride fast, my friend," remarked Captain Markoe whose troop of Philadelphia Light Horse formed part of Washington's escort. "Any trouble?"

"Trouble enough, I guess," answered the man, speaking with the drawl of New England, bringing his panting horse to the captain's side. "I am the bearer of despatches from the army at Boston to the Congress at Philadelphia. There is great news from there. Great news!" He slapped the pocket

of his plain coat as he spoke, calling attention to its well-filled condition with papers.

"Why, has anything happened at Boston?" asked Washington riding forward.

"Yes; there hath been a battle at Bunker Hill; and many are fallen."

"And the militia? Did they fight?" questioned the Commander-in-Chief quickly.

"To a man, sir. And not only did they fight like veterans, but they held their fire until the regulars were near enough for it to do the most good."

"Thank God," exclaimed Washington as though a weight had been lifted from his heart. "Then the liberties of the country are safe. Go on, my good fellow! Tell us the particulars."

Briefly the courier related the happenings of the bloody battle of the 17th of June. As was already known General Gage had been reinforced in May by the arrival of Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne,—the best generals England possessed, with a large number of troops. The city stood upon a peninsula connected with the mainland by a narrow strip of land called Boston Neck. General Gage had a strong fortification here and ships of war protected the harbor. But opposite Boston, on the north, was another peninsula upon which stood the large village of Charlestown, and two hills: Breed's Hill, which lay within cannon-shot of the city, and behind it at a greater distance, the higher eminence of Bunker Hill. Howe immediately saw the necessity of fortifying these commanding heights, and Gage concurred in his opinion. On the morning of the 17th of June, however, while leisurely preparations were a-making in Boston to occupy the hills, it was discovered that

the provincials had been beforehand in the project. For, learning of the enemy's intentions, Colonel Prescott and General Putnam had silently marched twelve hundred men to the hills, under the very guns of the English ships, and thrown up redoubts of their own. Three thousand regulars under Howe were immediately put across the water to drive them out. But the Americans repulsed them twice, and were dislodged from the works on the third assault only because their ammunition gave out. The British had lost fully a thousand men; the patriots, four hundred and fifty. Dr. Joseph Warren had been killed, and the City of Charlestown burned by the British during the battle.

The tale was soon told. Clearly the man's voice sounded amid the deathlike stillness with which the party listened to the recital. There was no other sound save the twittering of birds in the tree tops, and the cawing of some high flying crows. Before they had recovered themselves enough to thank him for his information the post-rider bowed, shook his horse into a run, and calling, " God speed you, gentlemen! " went thundering over the road to Philadelphia.

" This is tremendous tidings, gentlemen," spoke Washington presently. " And Warren dead? I grieve to hear it. His loss is a public calamity. He was the personification of the spirit of disinterested patriotism. We shall miss him."

" But it doth not seem possible that farmers with but long rifles could repulse the British regulars with such loss," spoke General Charles Lee musingly. " If true, 'tis good news in many respects. 'Twill fly to every corner of the land as fast as horses can carry it, and put the country in readiness for whatever the Continental Congress may decide upon. Yes; 'tis decisive news."

The tidings startled the whole country, and made people anxious to see what manner of man the new Commander-in-Chief was to whom the defense of their liberties had been intrusted. Every town and village on the route, therefore, turned out to greet him. The ride was a continuous ovation. Enthusiastic throngs and public bodies extended to him all the deference due to his exalted rank. Washington was now forty-three years of age, stately, dignified, and noble in demeanor, "the beau ideal of a commander." There was that about him which inspired confidence, the people felt that here was a man worthy and able to do and dare all things. A man who quickened their pulses by his mere presence; and who "awed them while he drew cheers which were a sort of voice of worship." And their courage rose, and their hearts grew strong as he passed.

The party arrived at New York on the 25th of the month, and left on the evening of the next day. General Schuyler took leave of them here, as the command of the military affairs of this Colony had been left with him.

A deputation from the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts met Washington at Springfield, and escorted him to Watertown where the Congress was in session. In the address of welcome given him by the president of the body the undisciplined state of the army was frankly explained. After this ceremony, which included a cordial welcome to General Lee, they were taken to Cambridge, three miles distant, where Washington established his headquarters in the house prepared for him, an elegant and stately edifice standing in the midst of shrubbery, a little distant from the highway. In after years this house was known as the Craigie House. As he entered the confines of the camp the welcoming shouts of the soldiers

and the thundering of artillery gave notice to the enemy of his arrival.

In company with Artemas Ward, Charles Lee, Israel Putnam, major-generals, and the eight bridadier-generals appointed by Congress, Washington rode forth the next morning to take command of the army. People from all the country round had come to see the spectacle, and a crowd was assembled on the Common where the troops were drawn up to receive the Commander-in-Chief. " It was not difficult to distinguish him from all the others. Tall, well proportioned, his personal appearance was truly noble and majestic." [1]

Taking his stand beneath a great elm-tree Washington made a few remarks, speaking of his visit to Boston twenty years before, and of the pleasant memories he had always kept of the New England metropolis. He then read his commission from Congress; after which, wheeling his horse, he drew his sword, and took formal command of the army.

The shouts and cheers had scarcely died away before the Commander-in-Chief set out to inspect his troops. It was a mixed multitude of people that he saw. There was little discipline, order, or government. It was an army of volunteers, drawn together by a " common feeling of exasperated patriotism," and depending for sustenance on the supplies sent them from their respective Provinces.

The besieging army lay around Boston in a roughly drawn semicircle about nine miles long. The troops of each Colony being encamped by themselves, governed by rules of their own making, and officered by men of their own choosing. Some had tents, others were in barracks; again others were in shelters made of stone and turf, or of boards and sail-cloth. Many

[1] Dr. Thacher's Military Journal.

were sadly in want of clothing and arms. There was one exception to the motley appearance of the encampments: the Rhode Island troops under General Nathaniel Greene. Here were soldiers well drilled and well equipped with tents and marquees pitched in the English style. Washington was much taken with their commander; a regard that was reciprocated.

In visiting the different points Washington rode to the heights commanding views of Boston and its environs, being anxious to become acquainted with the strength and relative positions of both armies.

The town was strongly fortified by formidable intrenchments on Bunker Hill, the scene of the recent battle, and an exceedingly strong fort on the Neck, the only entrance to the city by land. Floating batteries guarded the rivers, and ships of war defended the harbor. With the ill-conditioned and irregular forces at his command how could he hope to successfully oppose a town and harbor defended by ships of war and garrisoned by eleven thousand strongly posted veterans well supplied with artillery and munitions of war? A complicated and stupendous task had been set him, and Washington felt the awful responsibility of the situation.

"A tremendous duty has been assigned you, Your Excellency," remarked Lee who was making the tour of inspection with him.

"Yes, General; I realize it," answered the Chief. "But I trust that Divine Providence, which wisely orders the affairs of men, will enable me to discharge it with fidelity and success."

"I have observed that Divine Providence is ever favorable to strong battalions," remarked Lee cynically. Washington did not reply.

Washington's first care was to organize the army; to bring

order out of chaos, to fortify securely, and to redistribute the ill-posted troops wisely and effectively in strong intrenchments. He and Lee were on the lines every day drilling and organizing. The line of encampments seemed too long for the number of men to man it, but to recede from any part of it would dispirit the troops, so it was decided in a Council of War to maintain the positions now held but to strengthen them by fortifications and recruits. The men labored with hearty good will, and the results were astonishing, for they were well drilled in the use of axes and spades. But everything had to be done, for everything was lacking. There was neither a commissary-general, nor a quartermaster-general; there was no uniformity of dress among the troops; no artillery to speak of; and no resources to draw upon for the necessaries of war. A nation was in the making as well as an army. Instead of a strong central government, there was as yet but a Confederacy of thirteen Colonies which made Congress a slow moving body.

But early in August the army was in much better shape both as to drill and defences. Washington, therefore, began to press the siege hoping to draw the British into a general action. On issuing an order, however, for a fresh supply of powder, a startling fact came to light: there was not enough powder to fight with.

Washington was busy at headquarters with his aides, Colonel Mifflin of Pennsylvania, and John Trumbull, son of the patriotic governor of Connecticut, when Joseph Reed, of Pennsylvania,—his military secretary,—gave him the information. He was literally struck dumb by the revelation. For a long time he sat without speaking; a silence that none of the gentlemen dared break. It was a most critical situation. Should the enemy learn this fact, march out and attack him, the army

would be annihilated. After what seemed an interminable length of time he spoke:

"How much is there, Mr. Reed?"

"There are but thirty-two barrels in store, Your Excellency."

Thirty-two barrels! The whole amount would not furnish more than nine cartridges to a man. Washington had called for a report of the ammunition as soon as he had taken the command. The Massachusetts Committee of Supplies had originally collected three hundred barrels, and that amount had been reported to the Chief, without any mention of the quantities used. The situation was desperate; but it had to be faced. Washington met the emergency calmly.

"Gentlemen," said he rising, "the officers must know of this, but not the troops. The secret must be kept at all hazards, and a bold front maintained. Mr. Mifflin, will you and Mr. Trumbull have our swiftest couriers brought to me immediately. Mr. Reed, will you kindly write some despatches for me. There is need for haste."

So at once swift messengers were sent in every direction, calling for powder and lead. The smallest quantity was not to be overlooked. To the Governor of Rhode Island he also suggested that an armed vessel might be sent to seize a magazine of powder upon one of the Bermuda Islands. But when all this was attended to, there came the trying wait for returns to these appeals. A wait fraught with the keenest anxiety to the Commander-in-Chief, apprehensive of an attack. For two weeks the American army remained in this precarious state; at length a partial supply from the Jerseys ended the imminent risk. And yet there was hardly enough for one day's hard fighting, and the utmost economy in its use had to be enforced.

All through the winter the supply of powder remained woefully meagre.

At this juncture letters from General Schuyler informed Washington that the Johnsons, of western New York who had rendered such good service to England with the Indians in the French War, were now stirring up these same Indians against the Colonists, preparatory to joining the English in Canada. It was too powerful a combination to ignore, and an expedition against Canada was decided upon by both Congress and the Commander-in-Chief. Schuyler was ordered to proceed to Ticonderoga, and from thence up Lake Champlain against Canadian forts. Scarcely had Schuyler complied with this order when illness compelled him to turn over the command of the expedition to Brigadier-General Richard Montgomery.

As soon as he was sure of a supply of powder Washington detached twelve hundred picked men and sent them up the Kennebec River, under command of Colonel Benedict Arnold, to strike at Quebec, and by this diversion help the movement Montgomery was making against Montreal.

For the remainder of the summer, and throughout the autumn, the war was dull around Boston. The English were awaiting reinforcements, and the Americans were too feeble in men, and munitions of war, to make any assault with prospect of success. Several skirmishes took place, and on two or three occasions a general battle was apprehended. Howe was too wary to risk one; and, while Washington would have welcomed an opportunity to fight, his Councils of War voted against any movement against the enemy. All he could do was to tighten his grip steadily on the city.

And in Boston things were becoming critical with regard to fresh provisions. British cruisers, therefore, preyed upon the

New England coast, from Falmouth to New London, seeking plunder and endeavoring to make the inhabitants supply them with vegetables and fresh meat. Any refusal on the part of the people to yield up such provisions was met with bombardment of their towns. Gloucester was so served; Stonington, in Connecticut, was bombarded for a whole day; and in October, Falmouth[1] was totally destroyed. On his own initiative Washington sent out cruisers to prey even on the transports and store-ships of the British army. He actually supplied himself that winter with stores which had been intended for the army in Boston; and this while the enemy had a fleet in the harbor of the town.

General Gage was now recalled to England to explain why affairs with the army had fared so badly, and General William Howe was left in command of the British forces in America. Remembering the spirit he had displayed in the battle of Breed's Hill the patriots expected an immediate assault. Perhaps Howe remembered the bravery exhibited on that same occasion by the provincials, and preferred waiting for reinforcements before venturing upon an attack. For he contented himself by merely strengthening his defences, and preparing to put his troops into comfortable winter quarters. Perhaps, too, there was a hope that Washington's raw troops, being unused to war, might grow weary of the siege and go home. An apprehension felt by the American commander.

At this time the anxiety and strain of nerve upon the Commander-in-Chief were great; for the term of enlistment of many of the troops was drawing to a close, and as yet nothing had been done, decisively, to alter the relation in which he stood toward the enemy. The people began to murmur; the Con-

[1] Now Portland, Maine.

gress fretted; and Washington chafed at the situation; but he was still hampered by the considerations of cannon and powder. All that he could do was to try to make soldiers of the militia. New enlistments were accomplished tardily, and in December not more than five thousand recruits had joined the army. It became greatly weakened in numbers and spirit, and as the cold increased, want of comfortable clothing and fuel became almost insupportable hardships. Many regiments were obliged to eat their food raw for the lack of fuel to cook it. Fences, and fruit and shade trees for more than a mile around the camp were used for fuel. The various privations produced many desertions, and the Commander-in-Chief was beset on all sides with difficulties. Still, he worked hopefully on in preparing for action, either offensive or defensive. Presently there came into camp a train of wagons heavily loaded with provisions; then the schooner *Lee,* Captain Manly, captured off Cape Ann a British brigantine with a war cargo.

There were cannon of various kinds, and among them a huge brass mortar which General Putnam mounted, and christened the " Congress." There were muskets, flints, round shot, and musket-balls, but still not enough powder. The cry of brave " Old Put," as he patted the " Congress," and, gazing longingly at the British redoubts, wailed,—" Powder! Powder! Powder! ye gods, give me powder! " found an answering echo in the Chief's heart.

The old army departed, but a new one sprang up in its place. Montgomery captured St. John's, Canada, and a few days later Montreal surrendered to him. The prospects seemed bright for a brilliant campaign against Quebec when he and Arnold should have joined forces. So a few gleams of light shone amidst the darkness.

One winter's day, as Washington was riding through the camp, he came upon a scene of wild disorder among some troops. Among the reinforcements there had come some riflemen from Virginia. It had warmed Washington's heart to see the old familiar hunting shirt and leggins of the brave and hardy frontiersmen; but now here were these fine fellows in a rough-and-tumble fight with some sailors and fishermen of the troops from Marblehead.

These latter had made merry over the half Indian equipment of the new troops, and their joking soon resulted in a brawl. It had followed as a matter of course that snowballs had taken the place of jokes, and these in turn had given way to fisticuffs. Other men had joined the mêlée, and now about a thousand were pommelling each other. The tumult was at its height when Washington rode up. The local jealousies of the men from the different Provinces had been a source of great annoyance to him; so now, throwing the bridle of his horse to Billy Lee, who attended him, he sprang from the saddle, and rushed among them. In an instant more he had a brawny rifleman by the throat with each hand, shaking them and lecturing them vigorously. The rioters fled in all directions, and in less than three minutes none remained on the ground but the two he held. He was not troubled with further disturbances of this nature, and the action endeared him to the soldiers who felt that their stately general was one of themselves. So true it is that a man must be physically, as well as mentally, able to master men if he would lead them.

Again and again as the autumn and winter passed, Washington proposed aggressive measures to his Councils of War; and again and again his bold projects were overruled by the caution of his generals. He was bitterly tried the while by

news from Canada where the brilliant campaigns of Montgomery and Arnold had come to dismal endings. So nearly had success crowned their efforts that but a small chapter of unavoidable accidents caused their failure. Montgomery had been killed; Arnold wounded, and four hundred men killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. The opportune arrival of his wife, whom he had sent for in November, cheered him greatly.

Mrs. Washington came in a coach and four, with the horses ridden by black postillions in scarlet and white liveries. Cambridge was unused to such grandeur, and the equipage attracted much attention. Her presence gave vivacity to life at headquarters, and she seemed to bring with her something of the geniality and hospitality of Virginia as well. She was a great help and consolation to the general in assisting him to decide questions of social etiquette which came up. The overburdened leader had given scant attention to such obligations, considering graver matters of more importance, thereby giving some unintentional offense. His wife's " ready tact and good breeding " rescued him from these petty annoyances, and coaxed a little ease of mind for him out of the grim and trying work in which he was engaged.

Finally the opportunity to strike came. It had been long in coming, but it came at last. Henry Knox returned from Ticonderoga, whither he had been sent in November for military stores, bringing with him a long train of sledges, drawn by oxen, bearing more than fifty cannon, including mortars and howitzers, beside other material of all kinds needed for active operations. Also, one of the Marblehead schooners brought in, under the very nose of the English fleet, a government vessel filled with every sort of military stores. The rejoicing Commander-in-Chief reorganized his army, flinging out to the

breeze on Cambridge Common the flag of the United Colonies, with its thirteen stripes, and still in the corner the blood-red cross of St. George.

Washington now resolved to attack the enemy either by a general assault, or by a bombardment and cannonade, notwithstanding the British force was nearly equal to his in numbers, and greatly superior in experience. His plan depended upon the weather, as it was intended to pass over to Boston, from Cambridge, on the ice, if it became strong enough. The Neck was too narrow and too well fortified to allow him to hope for a successful effort to enter the town that way. Early in February, ten militia regiments arrived in camp; more supplies of ammunition were received; intense cold bridged the Charles River with ice, and he was eager to commence immediate and vigorous operations. As usual, his Council of War decided against him, but this time Washington would not be gainsaid. He meant to fight. Acquiescing in their decision against his crossing on the ice to make an assault, he determined to assail the place by land.

Slowly but surely he had been advancing his works all winter, strengthening them from time to time. Now he determined to occupy Dorchester Heights, bold hills which commanded Boston Harbor on the south. In the first week of March, therefore, he detailed a large body of troops, under General Thomas, to seize and fortify them. The ground was frozen too hard to be easily intrenched; so fascines, and gabions, and bundles of hay were collected during the second and third of March, with which to form breastworks and redoubts. During these two busy nights the patriots opened a severe bombardment and cannonade from opposite points to divert the attention of the English. The enemy replied with spirit, and the

incessant roar of the artillery thus kept up completely covered the rumbling of the carts.

On the evening of March 4th, the detachment of troops reached the Heights unseen, and set to work throwing up breastworks. A train of three hundred carts laden with fascines and pressed hay followed the troops. Bundles of the hay were placed on the town side of Dorchester Neck to deaden the rumble of the carts passing to and fro, and as a defensive against the enemy's fire should it be brought to bear upon the workers. All night they worked; piling up the earth, digging out the trenches, the roar of the covering guns sounding in their ears. It was severe labor, for the earth was frozen eighteen inches deep; but the men worked with more than their usual zeal, for Washington was there also. All night he went up and down the lines cheering and encouraging them. They had been raw material with which he had to deal, but good and sound after all. Often he had been discouraged, and sometimes vexed with their careless indifference to discipline; but now he knew his men, and they had faith in him. So every one did his best. It was a clear beautiful night, with the moon shining brightly, and the air serene, but the work went on unobserved by the British. Never was so much accomplished in so short a time, and dawn found the redoubts raised sufficiently to afford protection to the forces within.

"Well done, my brave boys," exclaimed Washington as the troops were replaced by a relief party in the gray light of the morning. "Well done. It is the 5th of March; let us give the enemy cause to remember that to-day is the anniversary of the Boston Massacre."

The men answered with shouts. Reinforcements of two thousand troops arrived. General Putnam stood ready to

make a descent upon the north side of the town with four thousand picked men as soon as the Heights on the south side should be assailed. Impatiently the Americans awaited the coming of the British.

For some time provisions had been plentiful in Boston, and the British had settled themselves down for a comfortable and gay time of amusement. When day dawned on the 5th of March, and they beheld the formidable works which had sprung up in a night, there was great excitement and running hither and thither in the town. Howe, overwhelmed with astonishment, exclaimed: " The rebels have done more work in a night than my whole army would have done in a month." But he saw that he must either take those redoubts, or, mortifying alternative, evacuate the city. He resolved to attack the rebels; but, with a quick remembrance of their sharp shooting, to make the assault at night.

A tremendous cannonade was commenced from the forts in Boston, and the shipping in the harbor, and all day the patriots waited impatiently for the British to attack. In the evening Howe made ready twenty-five hundred troops to cross to the foot of the Heights to storm them, if they could, but a furious wind that had arisen billowed the harbor and rolled such a heavy surf upon the shore where their boats would have to land, that it was unsafe to venture. During the night a tempest arose, and the rain came down in torrents. A terrible storm raged all the next day, and the British general was obliged to abandon his plan. But through it all the sturdy patriots toiled at their works until they were impregnable. Howe deemed them too strong to be carried, and he and his officers decided to leave the city. An informal request to Washington to permit the troops and fleet to depart unmolested, and he would leave

without burning the town, was not answered, as it was not official; but both parties tacitly consented to the arrangement.

But Howe hesitated in his preparations, dallying from day to day, until Washington placed a battery near the water on Dorchester Neck to annoy the British shipping. He also took possession of Nook's Hill which commanded Boston Neck and the south part of the town. Howe took the hint, and started his preparations to depart in earnest. His ships and transports were insufficient for the conveyance of the multitude of troops and Tory inhabitants, their most valuable property, and the quantity of military stores to be carried away. Therefore, he was obliged to leave behind him more than two hundred cannon and a great quantity of military stores of every kind. By the 17th of March, however, amid confusion, pillage, and disorder, the troops and refugees embarked, and set sail for Halifax.

With drums beating and colors flying an advance guard of the Americans marched into the city. On the following day Washington himself entered the town where he was joyfully welcomed by the people as their liberator. It was the first decided triumph of American troops over English regulars, and it infused confidence and strength into the patriots to meet the struggle which, it was fast becoming apparent, was to be a long one.

And this great achievement was due to him who " maintained the post within musket-shot of the enemy for six months together without powder; " to him who, " in the course of a few months, evolved an army out of an undisciplined band of husbandmen, and was enabled to invest, for nearly a year, and finally to expel a brave army of veterans, commanded by experienced generals."

And in those tedious months of siege there had been taken a long step toward union. Out of that mass of raw troops from the different Provinces, each body flying its own colors, there had come The Continental Army, with a Union Flag of thirteen stripes waving over it.

CHAPTER XIX

A Nation's Birth

AN epidemic of smallpox, that scourge of the eighteenth century, had swept Boston during the British occupation, and Washington at once took every precaution to prevent its spread, and to put the defences of the city in shape against an attack by sea.

While so engaged he made his headquarters at an inn at the head of State Street, kept by a Mrs. Edwards; the same rooms that Howe had occupied. The lady had a little granddaughter, and Washington would frequently take the child on his knee and talk to her.

"Which soldiers do you like best, my child?" he asked one day. "The red-coats or the blue-coats?"

"The red-coats, sir," answered the little girl with the directness of childhood.

"Ah, my dear," laughed Washington, "they look better, but they don't fight. The ragged fellows are the boys for fighting."

He was well pleased with the way his ragged soldiers had acquitted themselves, and in general orders he warmly commended their bravery and attention to duty, and gave them the

thanks of Congress. There was not much time given to rejoicing, however. The plaudits of the people were still ringing in his ears when he began anxiously to plan for the coming campaign, knowing the British too well to doubt that it would be a hard one. He did not know until later that Howe's destination was Halifax, but believed that the British fleet had sailed for New York City.

There were many reasons for the King's forces to seize and hold that city, if they could. It would be an important strategic base from which to work, and whosoever held New York and the Hudson River as far as Albany was in possession of the key to the continent. Not only could the New England Colonies be cut off from the Middle and Southern ones, but a clean passage could be made northward into Canada; westward to the region of the Great Lakes, and from thence southward to the frontiers of the Middle and Southern Colonies. There were, moreover, many rank Tories in the city and its vicinity, particularly on Long and Staten Islands; and in the bay and the harbor lay some of the King's ships upon one of which, the *Duchess of Gordon,* Governor Tryon had established himself, from which vantage point he did as much mischief as he could to the popular cause. As soon, therefore, as the work in Boston was accomplished, Washington began to detach troops to New York, following with the main body himself, and arriving there on the 13th of April.

Early in January Washington had sent General Lee to take charge of the district around Manhattan, but before he reached the city Congress had divided the Middle and Southern Colonies into two grand divisions, and had sent Lee to take command of the southern one. Washington at once placed General Putnam in charge, with orders to fortify at all available points, and

the veteran went to work with a will. Brooklyn Heights, across the East River on Long Island, was the position most necessary to be held, for guns mounted there would command New York City in the same manner that Dorchester Heights did Boston. This command was given to General Nathaniel Greene.

In the hopes of recovering the ground that had been lost in Canada Washington, at the behest of Congress, sent several regiments to the dispirited and broken forces of the north. This left him with but ten thousand troops for the defence of New York City. Ten thousand troops scattered fifteen miles apart, for none could tell where an attack would be made, and it was most likely to come at more than one point at the same time. He had grave doubts about his ability to hold the place, and in a conference with Congress in May, at Philadelphia, he told them of his fears. But Congress wished the city held. Washington's reply was characteristic:

"I desire," said he, "to obey the orders of Congress with a scrupulous exactness. I will hold the city as long as I can."

He also told the Congress to prepare for a long war, since no hope remained for a settlement with England on any terms which the Colonies would accept. The conference seemed to impart a "little military electricity"[1] to the action of Congress, for important measures were taken, under Washington's suggestions, for carrying on the war with more alacrity.

Upon his return to New York he wrote to his brother, Augustine: "We expect a bloody summer in New York and Canada, and I am sorry to say that we are not, either in men or arms, prepared for it."

[1] A phrase of General Lee's.

But as always he did his best with what he had. Different places were fortified along the Hudson, not only in New Jersey and on Manhattan Island to guard the river, but also in the Highlands, "that strait, fifteen miles in length, where the river bends its course, narrow and deep, between rocky, forest-clad mountains." Strong fortifications were also erected at King's Bridge, which joined Manhattan Island to the mainland; and the utmost exertions were made to put the river and the city with its environs in a state of defence.

There was still no sign of Howe, and while Washington was wandering in a "field of conjecture concerning the designs of the enemy," tidings were brought of the disastrous ending of the Canadian incursion, and that there was danger of a hostile invasion from that source. Along with this bad news came the intelligence that Sir Guy Carleton, British commander in Canada, had secured the services of a large number of the red-men to use against the Colonists; and that General Schuyler was gathering forces at Albany to protect the valley of the Mohawk against the inroads of these savages and also of those under the Johnsons. And now the Colonists were stricken to the heart by the information that not only were savages to be employed against them, but Great Britain had also made a wicked bargain with the German princes for men to fight them. Indians and Hessians to fight her own children! It seemed incredible.

Washington had taken up his headquarters at Richmond Hill, which was located upon the western side of Manhattan Island, a little outside the city proper. It was a large mansion, surrounded by noble trees and park-like grounds, though in rather an isolated situation. But remote as it was the people of the city often found their way thither with their trials, anxieties, and difficulties for the Commander-in-Chief to adjust.

Often, too, valuable information came to him in this manner. So, one morning, when an orderly entered and reported,

"There is a woman without, Your Excellency, who insists that she must see you, sir. She says her business is important," Washington said mildly:

"Very well. Let her come in." He glanced up inquiringly as the orderly ushered in a woman whose attire proclaimed her to be of the working class. "Be seated, madam," he said kindly, for she seemed to be laboring under great excitement.

The woman sat down, then rose again, saying hurriedly: "'Tis for your ear alone, sir. And 'tis most important."

At a nod from the general the secretary left the room. The woman came quickly to the overladen but orderly table where Washington sat.

"Sir," she said speaking in a low tone, and glancing about as though fearful of being overheard, "I work at Corbie's Tavern, which stands westward of Bayard's Woods, and north of Lispenard's Meadows. Do you know of it, sir?"

"Yes; it is a short distance southeast of this place," he answered briefly.

"There is a plot," she cried tremblingly. "A plot to kill you, sir, and to seize and kill all the field officers; to blow up the magazine, to spike all the guns, and to break down the King's Bridge."

"How know you this?" he asked calmly.

"I heard them talking of it at the tavern," she told him. "I was in the alley; a turfed alley it is, on the north side of the house, shaded by a long trellis overrun with vines, where ninepins are played. I was straightening it, sir, against some of the 'quality's' coming and wanting to use it, when I heard

voices outside in the garden. I listened, and I heard them planning to kill you."

"Did you know any of the men, madam?"

"Yes, sir. Gunsmith Forbes was there. 'Twas him as gave them the money, and 'swore them to secrecy on the book.' He gets the gold from Governor Tryon."

Washington leaned forward with interest at this. He had been at pains to cut off all communication between the citizens and Tryon who still lurked in the lower bay on board the *Duchess of Gordon.*

"Who is the Governor's go-between?" he asked.

"A nigger, sir. A mulatto-colored nigger, dressed in blue clothes. He was there last night. And Mayor Mathews; and lots of others. And they said that some of your life-guards were in it." Her voice trailed off into a whisper.

"Do you know which ones?" he questioned, his glance never leaving her face.

"No, sir. I heard them say that they had you for certain, because some of your own guards had been bought to help them. They would kill me if they ever found out that I had told you."

"Have no fear. No one shall know how I learned of the matter," he said reassuringly. A few more questions put him in possession of all that she knew about the affair.

After her departure Washington sat for a time in deep thought. Presently, he left the room, and calling for his horse, rode into the city where he placed the information before the Committee of the New York Congress of which John Jay was president. Mr. Jay immediately began a quiet investigation, and soon unearthed full particulars of the plot which proved to be just as the woman had told Washington. Governor Tryon

was its originator. The Tory mayor, David Mathews, and many others were implicated, and numerous arrests followed. Those who belonged to the army were tried by court-martial, and the rest handed over to the secular power. Thomas Hickey, one of the life-guards, who was the principal tool in the plot, was found guilty of mutiny and sedition, and treacherous correspondence with the enemy, and was sentenced to be hanged.

On the 28th of June he was executed in a field near the Bowery Lane in the presence of a large concourse of people. The gruesome spectacle was scarcely ended when four ships of war sailed quietly through the Narrows, and dropped anchor in the bay. General Howe's army was beginning to arrive.

On the *Greyhound* frigate, one of the first ships that passed through the Narrows, was General Howe. He brought with him all the troops that were at Boston, and reinforcements from England. Other arrivals swelled the number of vessels in the bay to a hundred and thirty men-of-war and transports, and soon the hillsides of Staten Island were white with the tents of thirty thousand men. He but awaited the coming of the fleet with the Hessians to begin action.

Washington watched these arrivals with great anxiety, and at once reported to Congress, calling for all the troops that could be sent to him. On July 2nd he issued a general order to the soldiers " to prepare for a most momentous conflict which was to decide their liberties and fortunes."

And on that same day, the Continental Congress passed unanimously the greatest resolution ever passed by a body of men: " Resolved that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." Two days later, on the 4th of July, 1776, the Congress adopted the Declaration of

Independence. By this Declaration the United States took its place among the nations of the world, proclaiming its faith in the truth and reality of the freedom of men.

Swift messengers brought the tidings to Washington who received it with gladness. In the evening of the same day that the news came, the 9th of July, he caused the several brigades, then in and near the city, to be drawn up to hear the Declaration read by their several commanders or their aides. In the hollow square formed by the brigade encamped in the Fields[1] Washington sat on horseback while one of his aides read the immortal words in a clear voice.

When the reading of the sublime document,—" the general effusion of the soul of the country,"—was finished, three hearty cheers were given by the brave men who pledged themselves to support it with their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

While all the bells in the city pealed forth the joy of the people a large concourse of them assembled, and proceeded to the Bowling Green in front of the fort. A statue of George Third had been erected here just six short years before, to show the gratitude of his loving subjects for the repeal of the Stamp Act. Now, amid the shouts of the multitude, this statue was pulled down, and broken up. As it was a great leaden equestrian statue, gilded, it was later run into bullets at Litchfield, Connecticut, and His Majesty served the cause of his lost Colonies by furnishing forty-two thousand bullets.

It is one thing, however, to make a declaration; it is another to support it. The joy of the people, therefore, was tempered by the fear of an attack. Three days later it seemed as though these apprehensions were to be realized, for there came the

[1] Now City Hall Park.

booming of cannon from the British fleet which lay at anchor near Staten Island. Panic stricken the people thronged the streets, while Washington sent the troops at once to their posts. Through his glass he watched the movements of the enemy, and his report scarcely allayed the agitation of the citizens. The British vessels were saluting in honor of the arrival of the British admiral, Lord Howe.—And with him were the Hessians.

Admiral Lord Howe was General Howe's brother, and Commander-in-Chief of the British naval forces in America. He was really desirous of bringing about peace with the Americans, and both he and his brother had received "great powers" to pardon and negotiate. Almost immediately after his arrival the admiral tried to open communication with Washington. Colonel Reed, on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, refused to receive a letter addressed to "Mr. Washington." Then the admiral sent an officer under a flag to New York, bearing a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esq. etc., etc." Washington received the officer with great courtesy, but declined to take the letter.

"But the etc., etc., implies everything," urged Colonel Patterson, the British officer.

"It may also mean anything," answered Washington. He added, with reference to the powers of the brothers to pardon, that there could be no pardon where there was no fault; and that the Americans were guilty of naught but defending their rights.

In consequence of these interviews Lord Howe wrote to his government that it might be well to give Mr. Washington his proper title. Congress, by resolution, expressed its approval of the course taken by Washington in the matter. For, if Ad-

miral Howe gave Washington his title of general, he recognized him as the representative of the young Republic which had created him such. An acknowledgment the English did not care to make.

Washington's reinforcements had come slowly. His army numbered but twenty thousand all told, a large part of which were raw militia, and nearly a fourth of them were on the sick list. He was untiring in his efforts to suppress the differences that would spring up between the men, and to prepare them for the solemn time to come. He made the most, too, of a victory which the Americans had gained in the South under Lee. A part of the British fleet under Sir Henry Clinton and Sir Peter Parker had attacked Fort Moultrie off Charleston, South Carolina, and had been gallantly repulsed. The tidings were received with gratification, but still the men cast speculative and apprehensive glances toward the white tents on the hillsides of Staten Island; for reinforcements to the enemy were arriving in alarming numbers.

July passed; August was ushered in, and still Washington waited for the British onslaught. To attack them was not feasible. He could only watch and wait, for the fleet gave them the advantage of being able to land where they would. Mrs. Washington and the wives of the other officers had long since been sent out of the way of the storm which was lowering over the city, and now the Commander-in-Chief issued a proclamation advising the people to remove out of harm's way.

Mid August found General Greene so ill with fever that he was obliged to go to a hospital in New York City, and General Sullivan, recently returned from Canada, was sent to take charge of the works on Long Island. At length, on the 21st of

August, the long expected information came that a movement, presaging an attack, was noticeable among the enemy's forces. A spy brought the intelligence that twenty thousand troops had embarked to make an attack on Long Island and up the Hudson. Fifteen thousand remained on Staten Island to attack points in New Jersey. All places were to be assailed at the same time, and " all were to be put to the sword."

Early on the morning of the 22nd reports of cannon and musketry were heard from Long Island, and columns of smoke were seen rising above the trees of the orchards. The enemy seemed to be carrying their plans into execution. Presently an express arrived at headquarters with word that a large force of the British had landed at Gravesend Bay, and that there had been a skirmish with some of the Pennsylvania riflemen.

Washington heard the report with anxiety. The next tide might bring the ships to attack the city, and he was obliged to retain the greater part of his forces for its defence, but he sent over a reinforcement of six battalions, holding five others in readiness to go if necessary.

Well-to-do citizens had long since left the town, but there were many who had not the means to go, and these were in great terror now. There was a report that Washington meant to retreat and burn everything behind him. Even after he had publicly denied it, his headquarters were besieged by crowds of people begging for protection. When he rode forth through the streets, on duty bound, the women and the children came around him, pleading for help, and he gave them all the comfort that he could. Again he urged the New York Convention to carry out their measures for the removal of these defenceless beings.

The skirmishing kept up through the next day; and the day

following, as there was yet no indication of an attack on the city, he crossed over to Brooklyn to inspect the lines.

Brooklyn was immediately opposite to New York, separated from it by the Sound, at this place called the East River. It was but a village, standing on a peninsula formed by the deep inlets of Wallabout Bay on the north, and Gowanus Cove on the south. Greene had drawn a strong line of intrenchments and redoubts from the bay to a swamp and creek emptying into the Cove, to defend the heights which commanded New York. About two miles and a half from the intrenchments a range of wooded hills formed a natural barrier across the island. "It was traversed by three roads. One, on the left of the works, stretched eastwardly to Bedford, and then by a pass through the Bedford Hills to the village of Jamaica; another, central and direct, led through the woody heights to Flatbush; a third, on the right of the lines, passed by Gowanus Cove to the Narrows and Gravesend Bay."[1] Washington felt the need of Greene to explain his plans as Sullivan had not yet become familiar with the locality.

The Chief noticed some confusion in camp which caused him much concern, and on his return to New York he gave the command of Long Island to General Putnam. In his instructions to him he called especial attention to the wooded hills beyond which lay the enemy's camp. The passes were to be guarded by the best troops, who should, at all hazards, prevent the approach of the enemy. Putnam went over with alacrity, for he had been quite miserable at being kept away from the fighting.

On the 25th Washington, who kept a viligant watch on the enemy's movements by the aid of his telescope, saw that por-

[1] Washington Irving, "Life of Washington."

tions of the encampment on Staten Island were broken up, while ship after ship weighed anchor, and dropped down the Narrows. The British were increasing their forces on Long Island, and he now concluded that they were about to make a push with their main force for the possession of Brooklyn Heights. He accordingly sent over additional reinforcements. The next day he crossed over to Brooklyn, aiding General Putnam with his counsels, for the latter had not yet been able to make himself well acquainted with the fortified posts beyond the lines. There was a great deal of movement among the enemy's troops, and a general attack was evidently at hand. Washington returned to New York in the evening, and passed a night of anxiety.

The volleying of musketry and the booming of cannon at dawn the next morning brought terror to the citizens. Washington was on the alert, waiting anxiously to see if the city were to be included in the attack. Five ships of the line were endeavoring to beat their way up the bay in the face of a strong head wind. All morning their efforts continued, but so strong did the wind become that they were forced to return to their moorings. Much relieved that there was no likelihood of an immediate attack, Washington hastened over to Brooklyn in his barge, and galloped up to the works. General Putnam explained happenings. General Stirling was defending the coast road, while Sullivan and his forces had the American left and centre. Five thousand of the choicest troops were in the battle, while four thousand militia remained to man the works. Everything seemed to be going well.

Taking his stand upon an eminence Washington scanned the field of battle through his glass. The din was terrific, and dense columns of smoke were rising from among the trees.

Suddenly, as a great thundering of artillery came from the left, he handed the glass to Putnam, exclaiming:

"Look! The enemy have outflanked Sullivan and are coming up on his rear."

It was true; a deep column of the red-coated British were descending the hills on the left into the plain. At this moment, Sullivan emerged from the wooded slopes of the hills, and found himself confronted by the enemy. The cannonading on his left had evidently apprised him of his danger, and he was trying to retreat to the lines. It was too late. Clinton's light-infantry and dragoons drove him back upon the Hessians who now thronged through the pass behind him. The Americans fought desperately, while driven backward and forward between their assailants. The rout was complete. "They were outnumbered, ridden down and sabred by dragoons, riddled by solid infantry, mowed by light batteries."[1] It was the first time the Hessians had appeared in battle with the Americans, and now they used the bayonet with such sanguinary fury that even the English were shocked. Washington wrung his hands in agony at the sight. He could not help them, for there were thousands of the enemy, and he had but four thousand militia. It would but sacrifice his men, and the works, and the city to the enemy. At length some of the Americans succeeded in cutting their way through the gleaming wall of bayonets and sabres, and escaped to the intrenchments; but the greater part were either killed or taken prisoners. Among these latter was General Sullivan.

And this is what had happened: Howe had landed his troops at Gravesend Bay on the 22nd with the definite object of forcing the American lines, and getting possession of Brooklyn

[1] Wilson, "Memorial History of New York."

Heights which would place New York at his mercy. For four days he reconnoitred. As has been said, the wooded range of hills was traversed by three roads. The first and central passes, he found by skirmishes, were well guarded by the Americans. He planned, therefore, to try for the third pass, which was in the Bedford Hills, by a night march, surprise the Americans, and seize the pass which would enable him to turn the left of the American advanced posts. General Grant was left to menace the American right flank, while De Heister with his Hessians was to command their centre. Neither, however, was to press an attack until the guns of the British van gave notice that the American left was turned. It fell out as Howe had planned; and the stealthy night march of the battalions under Generals Clinton, Percy, and Cornwallis, was made across country by the aid of a Long Island Tory. Bedford Pass was reached shortly before daylight of the 27th, and when they prepared to attack the pass they found, to their amazement, that it was patrolled but not fortified. The patrol was captured, and hastily the British took possession of it; then began their march behind the left flank and rear of the Americans which had just resulted in the capture of Sullivan and the greater part of his force.

Washington was now deeply concerned for the safety of General Stirling and his corps, who had been all morning exchanging cannonading with General Grant. For four hours they had fought magnificently, with colors flying, the enemy's artillery playing upon them all the while. And now as Grant began to press the attack furiously, the brave lads met the assault valorously. For Stirling had said to them as they were drawn up in line of battle:

"Boys, it is General Grant who is opposed to us. In Febru-

ary of last year I was in England visiting the House of Commons, when this very general arose and said, 'The Americans cannot fight. Give me five thousand troops and I will march from one end of the colonies to the other.' He may have his five thousand with him now, boys; we are not so many, but I think we are enough to prevent him from advancing further than that mill-pond."

The brave fellows laughed derisively, gave three cheers for their general, then straightened up prepared to do their utmost to convince the British general that there was a little fight in the Americans. As a matter of fact Grant had many more than five thousand troops with him, and Lord Stirling less than half that many; but events proved that even more were needed before any perceptible advance could be made by the British general. A fierce and bloody combat ensued as Grant began to push the attack, to which they responded gallantly. The first moves appeared indecisive.

But Washington, through his telescope, saw what they could not: that the enemy's reserve, under Cornwallis, was marching down a crossroad to get in their rear, and thus place them between two fires. He and his officers supposed, of course, that Stirling, finding himself hemmed in, would surrender without firing a shot. To his great surprise, however, Stirling formed with a small body of Marylanders, and boldly attacked his lordship while the rest of his troops retreated across the creek. The manoeuvre was plain. That their comrades might be saved from capture an heroic few would sacrifice themselves. But one opportunity for escape presented itself, which was to cross Gowanus Creek through the marsh to the lines; and the tide was rising. No time was to be lost, or the creek would become impassable. So, with less than four hundred remaining

of the Maryland regiment, Stirling charged full at Cornwallis. A charge that has never been surpassed.

A rain of lead poured into the ranks of the brave little band as they rushed upon the British, and Hessians picked them off from the hills. They drove the British back upon the Cortelyou House, a mansion which Cornwallis had seized as his base, and never halted until grape and canister were poured into their faces. "The shattered column was driven back—but only for a breathing space to gather their hearts together. Panting, bloody, wild-eyed, they gathered about Stirling once more, and charged again—this time with such frantic impetus that they swept the gunners from their battery and dashed like breakers against the very walls of the house. Cornwallis, astonished and confused, would have recoiled, but again the fire from the hills drove the wild lads back—only to return three times to fling themselves upon a reinforced enemy." Overpowered by numbers some were surrounded and bayoneted; a few succeeded in escaping; the rest were dead or wounded. Stirling was captured; but through the unexampled bravery of that little band the retreat of the majority had been covered, and all but one man had passed in safety across the turbid waters of the creek.

Washington had watched with agony that wild charge. "Good God," he cried wringing his hands, "what brave fellows I must this day lose!"

He could not help them. So great were the numbers of Howe's army that the few that he could send would be powerless. Sorrowfully he received the mob of flying people—for there was no vestige of army formation in the troops who retreated, and prepared for a desperate defence of the works. The enemy came on the run until they were within a few hun-

dred yards of the redoubts. As soon as they were within musket shot the lines nearest them received them with volleys of musketry and the discharge of a cannon. They paused, recoiled, and at an order from their officers drew back out of range. Washington was mystified, even while he was relieved, when the English encamped in a hollow way in front of the lines, but out of reach of the musketry.

He soon perceived Howe's design which was to commence regular approaches instead of trying to take the works by rapid assaults. Ignorant of Washington's real strength Howe had begun to have too great a respect for American fighting to risk the loss of life that he feared would attend a direct attack.

The night was fraught with anxiety for Washington. At four o'clock he made the rounds to see that all was well with his exhausted troops. The morning dawned, dark and lowering, and the enemy began to use their artillery early. They were proceeding to intrench themselves when a drenching rain drove them to their tents.

Reinforcements, consisting of Colonel Mifflin with two Pennsylvania regiments, and Colonel Glover with the Marblehead regiment of sailors and fishermen, arrived during the day, bringing a gleam of brightness to the gloomy aspect of affairs.

A heavy fog wrapped the island so densely the next morning that it could scarcely be penetrated. In the course of the morning the Chief sent Colonels Reed, Mifflin, and Grayson to reconnoitre the enemy from the western outposts in the neighborhood of Red Hook, a point jutting into the East River. A light breeze arose and gently lifted the fog from Staten Island. The British fleet was lying in the Narrows, and boats were passing to and fro from the admiral's ship as though carrying orders. There was some movement in preparation, and filled

with alarm the three speeded back to Washington with the information. At the same time it was reported that a British ship had sailed round Long Island, and was now in Flushing Bay. It was the evident intention of the British to have the fleet come up and anchor in the East River so that the army on Brooklyn Heights would be surrounded and entrapped. Washington immediately called a Council of War, and it was decided to retreat to New York.

Secrecy and despatch were necessary to withdraw nine thousand men, which Washington's force now numbered, with all the munitions of war, without the enemy taking the alarm. Word was sent to New York for vessels of all sorts to be collected, and to be brought to the east side of the city by evening. By eight o'clock in the evening all the boats of the Manhattan Island water front were at Brooklyn, and were placed under the management of Colonel Glover's sailors and fishermen of Marblehead. The guards and sentinels were posted as usual, and then quietly the retreat began.

Washington took his station at the ferry, superintending every movement. So quietly were matters conducted that the British had no warning that their prey was about to escape them. The fog still rested heavily upon the island and the harbor. But while it hung densely over Long Island and concealed the movements of the Americans, the atmosphere on the New York side of the river was clear. An adverse wind which prevailed in the early part of the night died away, and the turbid waters of the river became so smooth that the rowboats could be laden almost to the gunwale; and a favoring breeze sprang up for the sailboats. For long hours the fishermen-soldiers plied their muffled oars, until at daybreak troops, artillery, ammunition, provisions, cattle, horses and carts were

safely landed on the New York side. Scarcely anything was abandoned to the enemy, excepting a few pieces of heavy artillery. And the last boat that left the Brooklyn shore contained General George Washington.

It was just then that advance parties of the British hurried down to the ferry. The fog had cleared away sufficiently for them to see the rear boats of the retreating party half-way across the river. Howe had received the information at half-past four that morning. A Tory lady, living near the ferry, had sent her black servant to inform him of what was taking place. The darkey had fallen into the hands of a Hessian sentinel who could not understand him, and so detained him until daybreak as a suspicious person. An English officer at that time heard him with dismay. Cautiously a small body of the British investigated the abandoned works, but could not find so much as a biscuit with which to console themselves.

It was an extraordinary feat of arms as great as many victories. To collect boats from a distance, to move the troops and all the munitions of war within sight and hearing of the enemy seemed too incredible an achievement to be done; but it had been accomplished. For forty-eight hours Washington had not closed his eyes, and was the greater part of that time on horseback, but the army had been saved. Howe's joy in his victory turned to deep mortification when he found that his prey had escaped him.

CHAPTER XX

A Chapter of Disasters

WHILE Washington was endeavoring to rally the spirits of his discouraged troops, General Howe took possession of the abandoned works on Long Island. In a few days his whole force, excepting four thousand men who were left to hold Staten Island, were encamped on the banks of the East River, facing New York. At the same time Admiral Howe passed up the bay with his fleet, and anchored near Governor's Island, within cannon shot of the city.

And now there came a lull in events while Lord Howe, believing that the result of the late battle would dishearten many of the patriots, renewed offers of pardon to all who would return to their allegiance to Great Britain. He also paroled General Sullivan, and sent him with a verbal message to Congress, proposing an informal conference with a committee appointed by that body. After much discussion Congress consented to the conference, not wishing to reject any overture that might make for peace. The conference was held at the house of Captain Billop, situated on Staten Island; but it led to nothing. Lord Howe merely promised that the grievances of the Colonists would be considered, and redressed, provided they would return to their allegiance to the home government. As

the Colonies had petitioned for that very thing for ten years, and their petitions had been treated with scorn and contempt, the offer came too late. The committee in reply told his lordship that Congress had no power to bind the States to return to such allegiance. They also reminded him of the Declaration of Independence, and of the fact that the King's soldiers were even then waging war against them. The admiral expressed regret that under the circumstances he was obliged to prosecute the war, but unless they returned to their allegiance he had nothing to offer. So the matter was settled; the Americans were now convinced that England had determined upon their absolute submission.

In the meantime, Washington found the outlook " truly distressing," as he wrote to Congress. His troops were not only dispirited, but were deserting almost by " whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies, at a time." The sick list was very large; and there was great fear among the men of the Hessians, owing to the severities which had been practised upon Sullivan's men after surrender. The greatly superior force of the enemy also dismayed them. While he was tolerant of their defections, knowing the tenderness of inexperienced troops, it left the Chief uncertain as to whether they would fight at all if brought face to face with the enemy. Under such conditions he no longer had any hope of defending the city, and urged its abandonment upon his officers.

At length, having received instructions from Congress not to burn New York, as some of the patriots suggested in order that it might not serve as winter quarters for the enemy, but otherwise to do as he should see fit about holding it, Washington called a Council of War at which it was decided to withdraw from the city to King's Bridge.

It was a wise decision. The sick had already been sent to Orange Town, New Jersey, and preparations were now made to remove the stores to Dobbs' Ferry, twenty miles from the city. The main body of the army began moving toward Harlem Heights with the baggage on the 14th of September, leaving General Putnam with four thousand men in New York as a rear guard. It was none too soon. The British ships had gradually been making their way up the East River with the evident intention of cutting off the American army from the mainland; and while the patriots were moving toward the Heights word came to Washington that troops were landing in strong force from these vessels upon the islands at the mouth of the Harlem River. On the instant Washington was in the saddle, spurring to Harlem Heights. The movement looked as though the British meant to seize Harlem or Morrisania at once, but the night passed without further action.

The next morning, the 15th of September, dawned bright and beautiful. It was Sunday, but the usual divine services of the day were fated not to be held. Early in the morning three ships of war sailed up the Hudson, cannonading as they went, which firing was returned from the city batteries as well as the scarcity of heavy cannon would allow. They came to anchor above Bloomingdale, which movement entirely stopped the removal of stores and provisions to Dobbs' Ferry. About noon the ships in the East River began a heavy cannonading upon the breastworks on the east side of the island, and under its cover two divisions of the enemy, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, crossed over in boats from Long Island, and began to land at a point between Turtle Bay and Kip's Bay, about three miles above the city.

Both water-fronts had been well fortified, and the breast-

works at this place were strong enough to have checked their advance, but the troops who manned them had been in the battle of Brooklyn, and they fled without firing a shot at the first approach of the enemy. At the beginning of the cannonade Washington sent two brigades of Connecticut troops to support them, but they caught the panic of the others, and scattered in all directions, regardless of the commands of their officers.

At this moment Washington himself came galloping up to them. All morning he had been busy disposing his troops, preparing for the attack that seemed about to be made. Just before the firing on the East River began, he was standing on an eminence in front of the Morris House, now his headquarters, glass in hand, scanning the island and rivers in an effort to determine from what direction the attack would come. The situation of the mansion was one of the most picturesque on the island, commanding a view of the Harlem River and village, Long Island Sound, Flushing and Astoria, with the green fields of Long Island beyond. Below were the plains of Harlem. It was a fine vantage point. Scarcely had the ships in the Hudson ceased their firing as they came to anchor off Bloomingdale, when there came the heavy cannonade from the men-of-war in the East River. A dense pall of smoke swept the shore line and spread over the water which, as it drifted to leeward, obscured the Long Island shore from view.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the Commander-in-Chief to his aides, "the attack has begun. From the sound 'tis near the city. We shall be needed there."

He turned, issued orders for reinforcements to follow, then accompanied by his aides spurred down to the highway.

The road lay in the hollow of the land, and not till the Chief

and his officers reached a slight rise were they able to get a glimpse of the shores of the bay. Then it was to find the British fleet well in toward its intended landing place, the boats so filled with scarlet coats that "the river looked like a clover field in full bloom." The Commander scarcely glanced at them before turning his attention to the intrenchments on the river. An exclamation of surprise and dismay burst from his lips; for the Americans were retreating from their breastworks in great disorder. Before even a shot had been fired they were seized with panic which their officers could not control. It was at this moment that Washington, mortified at this exhibition of cowardice, dashed among them.

"What is the meaning of this disgraceful retreat, sir?" he demanded of an officer.

"The men were seized with fright, General; we could not hold them," was the answer.

A look of despair, of scorn, flashed over Washington's face. What could he do with troops who would run before firing a shot? Drawing his sword, and facing the fugitives he cried: "Who's with me for a charge?"

Before the men, who had shamefacedly come to halt, could reply, the red coats of fifty or sixty light-infantry thrown forward as a reconnoitring party came into view in the road. At sight of them the men broke again, and fled in headlong terror. Almost beside himself with anger at such unsoldierly conduct the Commander-in-Chief dashed his hat upon the ground, crying:

"Are these the men with whom I am to defend America?"

But neither the sight of his despair, nor the fact that he snapped his pistols at them, or threatened them with his sword served to stay the frantic flight of the panic-stricken troops.

Despair of the whole cause of liberty swept over Washington. Heedless of his own danger he turned, and spurred toward the enemy, seeking death rather than life with troops guilty of such infamous behavior. He might have fallen into the hands of the enemy had not one of his aides galloped to his side, seized the bridle of his horse, and forced him to ride away from the British now within eighty yards of the spot.

An instant, and the tempest had passed. The troops were gone, but the pressing danger was still to be dealt with. Putnam's division must be withdrawn from the city at once, or else be severed from the main body, and captured by the enemy; and the posts on Harlem Heights must be secured. In all haste, therefore, an express was sent to each place; while the sternly silent commander passed from post to post, giving orders and striving as far as possible to retrieve the disaster of the day.

The British were slow to push the advantage gained. Unopposed they landed in full force, and after sending a strong detachment down the road along the river front leading to the city, the main body marched almost to the centre of the island, and encamped upon an eminence, called the Incleberg. The day was excessively hot and sultry. The British generals, in high good humor at their easy landing, were disposed to let matters rest for a time while they sought relief from the heat, and solace for their stomachs. Eastward of the Incleberg, there stood a most attractive residence belonging to Mr. Robert Murray, a Quaker patriot. Thither the officers took their way for the food and drink they wished. Mrs. Murray received them with smiles and pleasant conversation, giving them the refreshments they desired in abundance, and delaying them as long as she could. Well she knew that part of the Americans

were still in the city, for the patriot officers had been served by her the day before as they passed by on their way to Harlem Heights. So while the British officers ate and drank, and rallied her on the panic and discomfiture of her countrymen, she answered them with ready wit, and gained two golden hours for the patriots.

In the meantime, Putnam, on receiving Washington's express, called in his pickets and guards, and prepared hastily to leave the city. On learning, however, that the enemy occupied the east and middle roads he found himself at a standstill; for the third road, leading up from the city to the village of Greenwich, lay along the water-front of the Hudson which would expose him to the fire of the British ships lying in that river.

The city at this time lay at the southern extremity of Manhattan Island, principally along the East River as far as the Fields; beyond which were high, conical hills, with low marshy lands, orchards, and meadows, which gradually rose into the heights of Harlem. Hills and marshes were so densely wooded with trees and underbrush that it would be next to impossible to take an army through them without a guide. Fortunately, Aaron Burr, one of Putnam's aides, knew the ground well, and told the general of another road by which the city might be left. This was a mere wagon patch cut through the hills as an extension of Great George Street, as the northern part of the Broad Way was called. So piloted, Putnam entered the woods beyond the fortifications with all haste, leaving behind him a large quantity of provisions and military stores, and most of the heavy cannon, much of which might have been saved had the post at Kip's Bay been properly defended. It was a toilsome march through heat and dust, and its difficulties were increased by the presence of women and children, families of

Whigs, who, terrorized by the coming of the British, accompanied the troops out of the city.

The woods were passed in safety, but with them ended the wagon path, and the army emerged into the road which led to Bloomingdale. This not only exposed them to the fire from the enemy's ships, but obliged them to pass by the Incleberg where the main body of the British was encamped. The rear was just marching by the eminence when a patrol discovered them, and a detachment of infantry was sent in pursuit. Overtaken in the Harlem Lane, near M'Gowan's Pass, a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the Americans suffered fifteen killed, and about three hundred taken prisoners. By extraordinary exertions Putnam succeeded in pulling off his troops, and joined the army after dark upon the Heights of Harlem.

By this time General Howe had taken possession of the city, but the main body of his army was encamped near the American lines. His right was at Horen's Hook [1] on the East River, and his left reached the North River near Bloomingdale; so that the encampment stretched clear across Manhattan Island, and both his flanks were guarded by his ships.

About a mile and a half beyond lay Washington's camp on the Heights of Harlem. The island was not more than a mile wide here; the heights extending for several miles northward to Spuyten Duyvil Creek which separated the island from the mainland. The Creek was spanned by a bridge, called King's Bridge, which formed the only pass from the island. The Hudson, or North River, was on the west, and Harlem River on the east. On the highest point of the rocky heights a fort, called Fort Washington, had been carefully fortified, with double lines of intrenchments about a mile south of it, extend-

[1] Horen's Hook, now 89th Street and East River.

ing from river to river. Further south of the outer line of intrenchments were two strong outposts: one at M'Gowan's Pass, the other on Mount Morris. Washington's headquarters were within the inner line at the Morris House, as before stated. Between the hostile camps extended a deep depression, or gully, known as the "Hollow Way," [1] leading from the Harlem flatlands to a valley on the Hudson River.

On the morning following the retreat from the city, September 16th, word was brought to headquarters that the enemy were advancing on one of the outposts in three large columns. Colonel Reed, the adjutant-general, was present when the report came in.

"Have I leave to go out to find the truth of that information, your Excellency?" he asked quickly. There had been so many false reports of the movements of the enemy that headquarters was becoming skeptical concerning them.

Washington assented, and Reed left the room at once. Presently the Chief mounted his horse, and rode toward the advanced posts. As he reached a high spur of land, called the Point of Rocks which jutted out into the Hollow Way, he heard so brisk and spirited a firing that he knew there was a sharp conflict at one of the outposts. Presently Reed came galloping back with information.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton and his Rangers have been driven from the redoubt at M'Gowan's Pass, Your Excellency," he cried.

"Did they fight?" asked Washington quickly. He wished to accustom his soldiers, by a series of skirmishes, to meet the enemy in the field. In this way they would regain the courage and confidence they had lost.

[1] The Hollow Way, now Manhattan Avenue and 129th Street.

"Bravely," answered Colonel Reed with enthusiasm. "They defended the post to the utmost, and were only driven in when overpowered by numbers."

"How strong was the attacking party, Mr. Reed?"

"About three hundred, I should judge," was Reed's reply. He was mistaken. The enemy was much stronger; the main detachment having been concealed behind a rising ground in the wood. "Look, General! here come our brave fellows now."

Down the Hollow Way, retreating in good order, came the Connecticut Rangers. At the same time three companies of British light-infantry issued from the woods that covered the corresponding heights to the southward of the Way. As they caught sight of the skirmishers the British winded their bugles triumphantly, sounding not a military order, but the "stole-away," as after a fox chase; an insulting blare intended to show their utter contempt for the Americans.

"They don't intend that we shall forget yesterday," exclaimed Reed, stung to the quick. "Oh, General, do something to wipe out that disgrace."

Washington's face had flushed, and he compressed his lips grimly as he heard the taunting notes of derision. Now, in answer to Reed's words, he called quickly:

"Order three companies of Weedon's regiment, under Major Leitch, to join Colonel Knowlton's Rangers, Colonel Reed. Tell them to gain the rear of the enemy's advance, while a front attack is feigned here."

Reed rode off with alacrity. The Chief with General Putnam, Colonel Knox, and the aides, watched the result breathlessly. The plan succeeded in part. The British ran down the hill eagerly, in order to possess themselves of some fences and bushes, which presented an advantageous position against

the expected front attack. In the meantime, Knowlton and Leitch, ignorant of the change in the enemy's position, having made a circuit, came upon them in flank instead of in rear; and a warm action ensued. The Connecticut Rangers and the Virginia Riflemen, vieing with each other in bravery, attacked the British with such spirit that the enemy fell back before them. In a short time Major Leitch fell, having received three bullets in his body. Shortly afterward the gallant Knowlton was mortally wounded.

" I do not value my life," he said, as Colonel Reed bore him from the field, " if we do but gain the day." He had the dying satisfaction of knowing that his men had behaved bravely.

Undismayed by the fall of their leaders the men fought gallantly on under command of their captains. The British were reinforced, and Washington ordered some detachments of the New England and Maryland troops to the support of the Americans. The action waxed hotter. At length the British were driven out of the woods into the plain. Their fire slackened as they fell back, and when new Continental troops appeared on their right flank as well, the retreat became almost a rout.

A chuckle sounded from Colonel Knox as he watched the flying British.

" A pretty good drubbing, I call it," he exclaimed. " These mighty men can run as well as other people. Why do you check the men now, General? " For Washington had ordered the retreat to be sounded.

For answer the general merely pointed over the tree tops of the southern ridge. The enemy were advancing in full force on the double-quick, their bright uniforms making a brilliant splotch of color on the landscape.

The encounter was a small affair in itself, but was a most signal victory for the Americans, for it filled the soldiers with new spirit, and revived the energies of the entire army. It also interested the government in plans to reorganize the forces on a firmer basis; it called the attention of the country to military needs and requirements; and, best of all, gave profound relief to the Commander-in-Chief.

He turned the affair to the best account. The parole the day following the battle was Leitch; and he publicly thanked the troops under command of that officer, who had first advanced on the enemy, and the others who had so resolutely supported them. Of Knowlton, who had fallen while gloriously fighting, he spoke as "one who would have done honor to any country." Major Leitch lingered until October, when he too died.

In daily expectation of an attack, Washington occupied himself by strengthening the approaches to his camp by redoubts, abatis, and deep intrenchments. In the course of his rounds of inspection, he was struck with the skill and science displayed in the construction of some of the works, which were thrown up under the direction of a youthful captain of artillery. He stopped to speak with him.

"Have I not met with you, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, Your Excellency," answered the young man modestly. "I am Alexander Hamilton. General Greene introduced me to you, sir."

"I remember, Mr. Hamilton. You were at Long Island with us in the retreat."

"And in the one from the city also, General," young Hamilton replied earnestly. "It seems my luck to be in naught else. I don't get a chance to fight."

Washington laughed. He liked a fighting spirit. "We

will try to change that to your satisfaction," he said. "Come and see me, Mr. Hamilton. I am at the marquee daily. You will like the young men of my family."

"Thank you, sir. I shall be pleased," responded the young fellow much gratified. Thus it was that an acquaintance began between these two men who were destined to have so strong an influence in molding the destiny of the new nation.

The situation of the Commander-in-Chief with respect to his troops was becoming critical in the extreme. He was, in fact, in a fair way of having no army to command. The terms of enlistment of many of his men were fast expiring, and unless new troops were raised at once, the army faced dissolution. So earnestly and convincingly did he write Congress about the matter that steps were taken to make the army more permanent, to raise the pay of officers, and to lengthen the terms of enlistment. But, while this was well and good for the future it did not relieve his present necessity. And Washington had to face thirty thousand highly disciplined soldiers, supplied with every requisite of war, with about twelve thousand men, undisciplined, and lacking in equipment.

The days glided by. Three weeks passed fraught with keenest anxiety to Washington, for Howe made no effort to attack him. Three weeks which brought two events of importance: the burning of a large part of New York City; and the heroic death of Nathan Hale who had fallen a victim in fulfilling that most perilous, most thankless task of all warfare—the mission of a spy.

Howe's inactivity seemed full of menace to the Commander-in-Chief. He feared that the British general meditated an irruption into the Jerseys, or a movement toward Philadelphia. Washington's prime object, at present, was to keep the enemy

so engaged about New York that the season would be too far advanced for him to invade any other part of the country.

In his uncertainty he kept a most vigilant watch on the movements of the enemy, and strengthened the defences of the forts on the Hudson. Forts Washington and Constitution were now pretty strong, and much reliance was placed on the Chevaux-de-frise which had been sunk in the channel between them. The obstructions were so commanded by batteries that it was believed that none of the enemy's ships would be able to pass them.

On the 9th of October, however, the *Phœnix,* the *Roebuck,* and the *Tartar,* three British men-of-war which had been lying for some time off Bloomingdale, got under way before a fair wind, and sailed up the river right through the obstructions without sustaining the least injury. Washington immediately gave orders to have the obstructions completed behind them, so that they should not easily get back down the river. They did much damage; sinking or capturing American galleys and river craft, plundering along the shores, and giving aid to the Tories. The interior of the State was greatly excited, and did all it could to repel them by calling out the militia.

Three days later an express from General Heath, stationed at King's Bridge, brought the intelligence to Washington that the enemy were landing in force on Throck's Neck. This was a peninsula in Westchester County, stretching upwards of two miles into the Sound, about nine miles from the camp on Harlem Heights. It was evidently Howe's design to get in the rear of the patriotic army, and not only cut off its supplies, and interrupt its communications with the main country, but also to gain possession of the North River above King's Bridge.

Washington immediately strengthened the post at King's

Bridge, and sent detachments to General Heath with orders to prevent the enemy from marching inland. So skillfully did Heath dispose his troops that Howe was held to the Neck, and sat himself down to wait for artillery, military stores, and reinforcements.

The situation of the American army was now perilous. The check given to the British was but temporary, and it was evident that another retreat was necessary. Such at least was the conclusion of the Council of War held on the 16th of October. On the very day that Howe landed his forces on Throck's Neck General Lee, flushed with his victory in the South, arrived in camp. Washington welcomed him gladly for he esteemed his judgment and military experience highly. Lee's fund of high spirits and his rough, cynical humor made him a favorite with both men and officers, and he soon became their idol. The name of Fort Constitution, on the Jersey shore, where Greene commanded, was changed to Fort Lee in his honor. So in the Council of War, when he urged the necessity of leaving Manhattan Island with great earnestness, his opinion carried great weight.

"How can you think of holding a position where the enemy are so strong in front and rear?" asked he. "Where ships have the command of the water on each side, and where King's Bridge is your only pass by which to escape being wholly enclosed? Has not your recent experience on Long Island and at New York taught you the danger of such positions? For my part," he concluded, "I would have nothing to do with the islands to which you have been clinging so pertinaciously—I would give Mr. Howe a fee-simple of them."

It was wise advice, and gave Washington much pleasure; for it was his own opinion. At this period it was the custom that

every important move of the army should be the result of a consultation of general officers, adopted only when approved by the majority. The officers had not approved leaving the island until they found that both Washington and Lee agreed on the advisability of retreat. It was then decided to leave Manhattan Island, but it was also determined to hold Fort Washington, and to defend it as long as possible. This latter was in accordance with a recent resolution of Congress which had desired the Commander-in-Chief, " by every art, and expense, to obstruct, if possible, the navigation of the Hudson River between Forts Lee and Washington."

A strong garrison was therefore left in Fort Washington, under command of Colonel Magaw who was solemnly charged by Washington " to defend the post to the utmost extremity." Preparations were then made to leave the island. General Lee was stationed on Valentine's Hill, immediately opposite to King's Bridge, to cover the transportation of the baggage and stores. The three other divisions of the army, under Generals Heath, Sullivan, and Lincoln, pushed slowly up the western side of the Bronx River, fortifying as they went a chain of camps, upon a ridge of hills from King's Bridge to the village of White Plains, a distance of thirteen miles. On the 21st of the month Washington left headquarters on Harlem Heights, arriving at White Plains two days later.

Meantime Howe united his forces at Pell's Point, east of the Bronx River, and also moved northward. As his line was parallel to that of the Americans, although further east, sharp skirmishes took place frequently. So well did his troops behave in these conflicts that Washington complimented them publicly. They were slight successes, but they reanimated the men, and accustomed them to danger. They also had the ef-

fect of causing General Howe much irritation, and increasing his caution.

While Washington encamped upon the Heights at White Plains, Howe took post at New Rochelle, a village on the Sound. The American camp was upon high ground, the right wing partly protected by the Bronx; the left resting on a small, deep lake among the hills. In front were some strong intrenchments.

On the right of the army, about a mile from camp, was a hill called Chatterton's Hill. As this partly commanded the right flank, from which it was separated by a marshy piece of ground and the Bronx, which at this place was easily passable, Washington sent General McDougall to take possession of it. His force consisted of about 1,600 men, principally militia; and his communication with the main army was open.

On the 28th General Lee arrived with the baggage, artillery, and a train of wagons, and Washington drew in his outposts. It was his intention to change the encampment to a still stronger position in his rear as soon as the military stores collected at this place could be removed. As soon as Lee arrived Washington rode out with him, and other general officers who were off duty, to reconnoitre the camp and its environs. A height that seemed eligible for encampment caught their glance, and they were riding toward it when a trooper came spurring up to them.

"The British are approaching, sir," he cried. "They are in full force."

"Then, gentlemen," said Washington, "we have other business to attend to than reconnoitring." Putting spurs to his horse he set off at full gallop, the others spurring after him.

The army had already been posted in order of battle by Ad-

jutant-General Reed, and calmly Washington waited the approach and attack of the British.

The enemy advanced in two columns, a brilliant yet formidable array, with arms glittering in the sunshine. The right formed behind a rising ground, about a mile from the American camp, and opposed to the American centre. General Howe was with the second division, and when near White Plains he held a Council of War in a wheat field. It was his intention to attack Washington in front, but the commanding height of Chatterton's Hill caught his eye, and he determined first to get possession of it, as preliminary to an attack on the American centre and right.

He therefore directed Colonel Rahl, with a brigade of Hessians, to cross the Bronx and make a circuit so as to turn McDougall's right flank, while Brigadier-General Leslie, with a strong corps of British and Hessians, should attack him in front.

Placing fifteen or twenty pieces of artillery on high ground commanding the hill the British opened a furious cannonade; under cover of their fire Leslie constructed a rude bridge over the Bronx River, and attempted to cross and ascend the steep wooded slopes to dislodge the Americans from their hastily constructed breastworks. In so doing they were severely raked by two field-pieces, planted on a rocky ledge, and in charge of Alexander Hamilton. The British recoiled, fell back, and did not advance again until they were joined by Colonel Rahl and his Hessians.

Then the whole force pushed up the slopes and ravines along the declivities of Chatterton's Hill. Gaining the top, they commenced a vigorous assault. The militia in the front line immediately fled, but the regulars maintained their ground with

great gallantry. Twice the British were repulsed, when an attack on his right flank by Rahl compelled McDougall to give way, and retreat; but for some time he kept up an irregular fire from the stone walls about the scene of action. At the bridge over the Bronx, the retreating troops were met by General Putnam who was coming to their aid with a brigade. As the hill was lost the attempt to regain it was deemed unadvisable, and the troops slowly marched back to camp.

Naturally Washington expected the enemy to follow up their victory by an assault upon his main body, but it was late in the afternoon when the action on the hill was finished, so the British contented themselves by working upon intrenchments. The night that followed was an anxious one for the Commander-in-Chief. He did not know but that the British might attack during the night, or by daybreak next morning. All night, therefore, the lines were manned while the right wing was thrown back to stronger ground. Three additional redoubts were constructed, the intrenchments doubled, with a line in front, on the summit of the post. They looked like impregnable works, when they were finished, but were in reality only defences against small arms. In fact, they were made of Indian corn taken from a neighboring corn-field, and pulled up with the earth clinging in masses to the stalks. The roots of the stalks and earth on them placed in the face of the works, answered the purpose of sods and fascines. The tops being placed inwards, as the loose earth was thrown upon them, became as so many trees to the work.[1]

Howe's amazement when he saw the works the next morning was profound. So solidly constructed did they appear that he deferred his intended assault, and ordered up Lord Percy

[1] "Heath's Memoirs."

from Harlem with reinforcements, meantime throwing up lines and redoubts in front of the American camp as if preparing to cannonade it. The reinforcements arrived on the evening of the 30th of October, and preparations were at once made to storm the American works the next morning. In the night, and during the early part of the succeeding day, a violent rain still further postponed the attack.

During this interval Washington removed his sick, his heavy baggage, and his provisions to much stronger ground, burned the barns and outhouses containing forage and stores, which there was no time to remove, and then marched his whole army to a strong position, five miles distant, among the rocky hills about Newcastle.

The position was of such strength that Howe dared not attack him, and for several days he remained quiet and inactive. Then he set off with his whole force toward the North River, on a road leading to Dobbs' Ferry. Either it was his intention to make an incursion into the Jerseys, or to proceed up the river toward the forts in the Highlands. His manœuvre might also be a feint to throw Washington off guard, so that he might return suddenly, and gain his rear. Washington kept a close watch on every movement, giving both Governor Livingston of New Jersey and General Greene at Fort Lee intelligence of this new move of the enemy. Greene's attention was particularly called to the defences of Fort Washington.

The British army retired slowly down toward King's Bridge, and their design was soon made manifest. They were going to invest Fort Washington. As the British approached Manhattan Island, three ships of war passed up the North River, notwithstanding the fire from the batteries of Forts Lee and

Washington, and also notwithstanding the additional obstructions which had been placed in the river.

On being informed of this Washington wrote at once to Greene stating that the fact was so plain a proof of the inefficiency of all the obstructions thrown in the channel, as to justify a change in the dispositions of the troops. "If we cannot prevent vessels from passing up the river," wrote he, "and the enemy are possessed of all the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to hold a post from which the expected benefit cannot be had? I am therefore inclined to think that it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington; but, as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders as to the evacuation of the fort as you may judge best, and so far revoking the orders given to Colonel Magaw, to defend it to the last."

Believing that the fort was strong enough to withstand any attack, and convinced of its importance, Greene adhered tenaciously to the policy of maintaining it, declaring that the garrison could at any time be brought off should its situation become desperate.

It had become certain by this time that Howe would not make a sudden return to Northcastle, but, as he was busy collecting boats at Dobbs' Ferry, it might mean an incursion into the Jerseys, or an attack on the forts of the Highlands. Washington, therefore, made all his arrangements accordingly. The troops which had been raised on the western side of the Hudson River were to be stationed in the Jerseys under command of General Putnam. Another division, under General Heath, was to coöperate with the New York militia in securing the Highland passes on both sides of the Hudson; while a third division, composed of the eastern regiments, would remain at

Newcastle under General Lee, with orders to join the Commander-in-Chief should the enemy cross the river. Washington then left the camp to look after the defences of the Hudson.

He was exceedingly anxious concerning Fort Washington; so, after making all the arrangements in his power for the defence of the forts, he crossed the Hudson, and followed in the rear of the troops destined to act in the Jerseys, proceeding to the quarters of General Greene, near Fort Lee, arriving there on the 13th of November.

To his great disappointment he found that Greene had taken no measures for the evacuation of the fort, although it was already invested by the enemy on all sides but one; and the troops under Howe which had been encamped at Dobbs' Ferry were said to be moving down toward it. True, his orders to Greene had been discretionary as to withdrawal, and the latter believed the fortress to be impregnable. He had therefore reinforced it so that its garrison now numbered upwards of two thousand men, composed almost entirely of Pennsylvania troops under Colonel Magaw and Lambert Cadwalader. The one exception was a small detachment of Maryland riflemen under Colonel Rawlings. Magaw, so Greene told Washington, thought the place in no immediate danger.

Washington was troubled. Should Howe bring his whole force against the fort it was in great danger. On the other hand, there were evidences that some other object was in view. The British troops on Staten Island were being steadily reinforced; the small boats of the line-of-battle ships and frigates were gathered opposite Amboy and Paulus Hook; large supplies of forage and cattle were massed at various points. Everything, in fact, betokened an intended descent of the enemy into New Jersey. Under the circumstances, though his

better judgment was against it, he let himself be overruled by Greene as to the withdrawal of the garrison from the fortress, and went to Hackensack where his troops were encamped, to send detachments to Brunswick, Amboy, Elizabethtown, and Fort Lee, so as to be ready at the various points to check any incursion into the Jerseys.

Late in the afternoon of the very next day, however, an express from Greene came spurring into camp with the information that the attack on Fort Washington was to be made the next day. Howe had already sent in a summons to surrender to Magaw, threatening a massacre in case of resistance. Magaw had replied with great spirit that he had determined to defend the post to the last extremity.

Washington at once set forth for Fort Lee where he arrived at nightfall. He found that Greene and Putnam were over at Fort Washington, so he threw himself into a boat to follow them. Midway of the river, however, he met them returning to Fort Lee.

"How are matters going, General Greene?" he asked quickly.

"Fine," cried Greene exultantly. "They could not be better. The garrison are in high spirits, and are capable of making a good defence."

"How many men are there?" asked Washington.

"Nearly three thousand, sir. I sent over more reinforcements."

"But the fort cannot hold more than a thousand," exclaimed the Chief aghast. "Should the troops be driven in from the outer works the fort would not hold them. It was a mistake to hazard more men."

"All is well, General," spoke Putnam reassuringly.

" There is no cause for alarm. Magaw would break his heart if you were to call him off now. He is sure that the place cannot be carried. It is too strongly intrenched."

" But the fort is invested on all sides but this, is it not? " demanded Washington with some excitement. " The garrison ought to be withdrawn."

" But Congress wishes it held, General," reminded Greene. " We need the fortress in connection with Fort Lee for the defence of the river. Everything is all right. If the tide of war should go against us there the garrison can be brought off at any time. Return to Fort Lee, I pray you. All is well."

Yielding to the earnestness of his generals Washington reluctantly suffered himself to return to the fort on the Jersey side. He passed a most restless night which would have been more uneasy than it was had he known that one William Demont, who had been adjutant to Colonel Magaw, had deserted to the enemy, carrying sketches and descriptions of the fortifications which aided Howe greatly in carrying out his plan of attack.

Early the next morning came an express from Magaw, telling of the dispositions of his troops. Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, with eight hundred Pennsylvanians, was posted in the outer lines on the south side of the fort to oppose Lord Percy and his force of British and Hessians. Colonel Rawlings, of Maryland, with a body of troops, many of them riflemen, was stationed by a three-gun battery, on a rocky, precipitous hill, north of the fort, and between it and Spuyten Duyvil Creek, opposing General Knyphausen and his Hessians. Colonel Baxter, of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with his regiment of militia, was posted east of the fort, on rough, woody heights, bordering the Harlem River, to watch the motions of the

enemy, who had thrown up redoubts on high and commanding ground on the opposite side of the river, apparently to cover the crossing and landing of troops.

The dispositions were well made, but it was with deep foreboding that Washington, surrounded by several of his officers, took up a position on the rocky heights of Fort Lee to view the attack.

But Howe's scheme of procedure was exactly suited to the needs of the situation. He planned four simultaneous attacks; on the north, by General Knyphausen and Colonel Rahl with the Hessian army; another on the east, by General Mathew and Lord Cornwallis who were to cross the narrow Harlem River in flatboats and land under Laurel Hill; a third some distance further down the river, as a feint to distract attention; and a direct fourth advance from the south by Lord Percy with a large force of British and Hessian troops.

" About noon, a heavy cannonade thundering along the rocky hills, and sharp volleys of musketry, proclaimed that the action had commenced." Much of the battle was hidden from Washington's sight by the intervening hills and forest, but the roar of cannon from the valley of the Harlem River, the sharp and incessant reports of rifles, and the smoke rising above the tree tops, told him of the spirit with which the assault was received at various points, and a hope sprang up that the defence might, after all, be successful. On the south the lines lay open to him, and the action there could be plainly seen through the telescope.

He saw Cadwalader gallantly repulsing Lord Percy's assault; he saw Baxter, from behind rocks, and trees, and the breastworks thrown up on the steep river banks of the Harlem repelling the landing of troops under General Mathew and

Lord Cornwallis, for a time with success. He saw Cadwalader send a detachment to oppose the landing of a force further down the river, which they did manfully. He saw the gallantry, the bravery, the courage with which the heroic garrison defended the post, and his heart beat high with admiration and hope. Then, suddenly, there came an overpowering rush of numbers from the enemy. Baxter fell, valiantly fighting, his troops retreating to the fort; the detachment lower down the river was overwhelmed; post after post was taken. Cadwalader, doubly assailed by Lord Percy and Cornwallis, who had marched upon his flank, fell back, stubbornly contesting every inch of the way, his tract marked by slain Hessians.

The defence on the north of the fort had been equally obstinate and unsuccessful. The bravery of Colonel Rawlings and his little band of Marylanders could not avail, however, against a force of seven times their number, and they were driven from their post by Knyphausen and Rahl to the very gates of the fort itself.

"All is lost," exclaimed Washington with a hopeless gesture. For now Cadwalader's line was broken, and his troops, overpowered by the great numbers of the enemy, were in full retreat. "We must get the garrison off! Who will carry a message to Magaw?"

"I, sir," exclaimed Captain Gooch, of Boston, a brave and daring man.

"You know it may be death?" said Washington.

"I know," said the captain quietly, "but the message shall be carried."

Without more ado Washington wrote a short note to Colonel Magaw telling him that if he could hold the fort until night he would try to take off the garrison in boats.

Captain Gooch took the note, saluted, then turning ran down the slopes of the Palisades to the river, jumped into a small boat, and pulled hastily across to the bank on the opposite side. Washington watched him intently as he landed, and ran up the slopes to the fort itself. He saw him come out, dodge the Hessians who surrounded the fortress, and run, as they cut and slashed at him, down to the river, escaping almost by a miracle.[1]

It was too late. Hemmed in on all sides by the enemy Magaw could not maintain the place. Nothing could save him now, and Knyphausen had already sent in a summons to surrender. He was compelled to comply with the summons.

Washington saw the American flag hauled down, and the meteor flag of England run up in its place. He saw too, worst sight of all, his brave men cut down and bayoneted after the surrender. And at that sight a sob burst from his overcharged heart, and he wept; bitter, unavailing tears of regret. For had he but followed his own judgment he would have brought off the garrison, and would not have to reproach himself with the fall of the fortress. It was all over now. The pike, and ball, and bayonet of the British had reached the goal. After one of the most stubborn defences on record Fort Washington had fallen. With nearly three thousand of the best troops of the army, and all the munitions of war, the fortress was in the hands of the enemy.

[1] "Heath's Memoirs."

CHAPTER XXI

The Ebb Tide

AS England's flag was flung to the breeze from the ramparts of the fort a long silence fell upon the little group of Americans who watched from the Jersey shore. After a time, with a calmness that was heavy with grief, Washington spoke:

"Fort Lee is no longer of use to us in defending the Hudson, gentlemen. Prepare at once to abandon it."

The removal of stores to Hackensack, where the main body of the army was encamped, began immediately. The loss of Fort Washington was a great blow to the American cause, but its worst effect was upon the army and the recruiting service. The new troops called for by Congress had not yet been enlisted, and this disaster would make men slow to come forward. There began to be sullen murmurs among the soldiers, and some of Washington's own aides traduced him in secret, and began to make favor with other generals by praising them and criticising him, against the possibility that he might be superseded. So true is it that victory is the only light by which the multitude can see the merit of a soldier. The bitterest

hours of Washington's life were upon him, and he was to have need of all his courage and fortitude to meet them.

Before the removal of the stores from Fort Lee was completed word was brought to Greene that Lord Cornwallis with six thousand men had landed at Closter Dock, five or six miles above the fort, and was approaching on the double quick. Greene hastily despatched an express to Washington, who was at Hackensack superintending the movements of the army there, placed the garrison under arms, and sent out troops to hold the enemy in check.

Washington lost no time in getting to Fort Lee. His entire force was too small to risk an engagement with the enemy, and he did not wish a repetition of the disaster of Fort Washington. As soon, therefore, as he was informed that the British were scattering across the country, he knew that their design was to enclose the garrison and the army between the North and Hackensack Rivers; so he ordered an immediate retreat. No time was to be lost, so rapidly were the enemy approaching. The troops sent out to check the British were recalled, and the retreat commenced in all haste. All the heavy cannon, except two twelve pounders, with a considerable quantity of provisions and military stores, including three hundred tents, were left behind. But with all their speed the rear had scarcely passed over the bridge before the vanguard of Cornwallis's army marched into the camp upon the Hackensack. A little lingering and Washington and his whole army would have been captured.

The next day the Commander-in-Chief faced the gloomy prospect before him. It was evident that the seat of war was to be changed to the Jersey side of the Hudson, and he needed reinforcements. His army numbered barely three thousand

men, war-worn, weary, and utterly dispirited by ill-success and the recent loss of their tents and baggage. There were, too, many loyalists in New Jersey, and the ardor of the Whigs had been cooled by the recent defeats of the Continental army. Washington could not look for succor from them; therefore he wrote to General Lee, whom he had left at Northcastle, "to cross the North River, and be in readiness to join him should the enemy continue the campaign."

As this part of Jersey was a level country, without rocks or hills to serve as a fastness, and his men were without intrenching tools, he resolved to avoid an engagement with the enemy, and to retreat until he could find a place where he could make a stand. Therefore, he broke camp again and withdrew to the west bank of the Passaic River, in the neighborhood of Newark, closely followed by Cornwallis.

His army was melting away. The terms of enlistment of many would soon expire; and it was not probable that, disheartened as they were by defeats and losses, they would reenlist. The militia had almost all disappeared; and in his need Washington sought in every direction for assistance, writing letters to every State, describing his hazardous situation. Colonel Reed was sent to William Livingston, the governor of New Jersey, and General Mifflin was despatched to Philadelphia to implore immediate aid from Congress, and the local authorities.

Connecticut and Massachusetts responded promptly by raising more than six thousand militia, but there was necessarily delay in assembling them, and their march was stopped abruptly by the appearance of the enemy in their immediate neighborhood. An expedition under Sir Henry Clinton and Sir Peter Parker sailed from New York, and took possession

of Newport, in Rhode Island. This invasion excited so much alarm that the forces raised for Washington were retained for the defence of their own States.

It will be remembered that there was a detachment under General Heath in the Highlands, guarding the Hudson, but it was vitally necessary to keep these troops at that place lest Howe should form a junction with the British forces in Canada, and so cut off New England from the rest of the States. Therefore, Washington's main reliance was upon Lee, and he urged him to hasten his march to join him, cautioning him to keep high enough up country to avoid the enemy, as he understood they were taking measures to intercept his march. Without reinforcements Washington assured him that Philadelphia would fall into the hands of the enemy, and the State of Jersey be overrun.

Lee did not heed the requests, and the Commander-in-Chief finally sent him a positive order to march to his relief. Lee, however, loitered and lingered; dreaming of succeeding Washington in the chief command so soon as he should perform some signal service that would redound to his personal glory. Meantime the situation of his superior officer was daily becoming more perilous.

From Newark Washington once more took up his line of march, continuing his retreat toward New Brunswick, on the Raritan; but so close was Cornwallis upon him, that his advance entered one end of Newark just as the American rear-guard left the other. Washington made some show of resistance at the Raritan, hoping to retard the march of the enemy by a feint; but it was unavailing. Lord Cornwallis pressed forward so rapidly that he was obliged to resume his retreat. Through Princeton he marched, and on to Trenton,

which the harassed army reached on the 2nd of December. Washington immediately proceeded to remove his baggage and all his stores across the Delaware.

Hoping to be joined by General Lee he then started back toward Princeton with such of his troops as were fit for service, there to be governed by circumstances. But Cornwallis was himself within two miles of Princeton; so Washington hastened back to Trenton, and collecting the boats from all quarters, transported his troops across the Delaware, posting them in such a manner as to guard the fords. It was just in time. With all the pomp of war Lord Cornwallis came marching down, expecting to get boats and immediately pursue him. But his lordship was effectually brought to a stand. For Washington had collected all the boats for seventy miles up and down the river, and secured them on the right bank. Cornwallis reconnoitred the river for a considerable distance, and made an attempt to seize some of the boats, but was unsuccessful. There remained but the alternative of constructing boats, or wait for the freezing of the Delaware, so that he might pass his troops over the ice. He chose the latter, and gave up the pursuit. Then, distributing the Hessian troops in cantonments along the left bank of the river, stationing his main force at New Brunswick, he returned to New York.

Openly now the English boasted that as soon as the Delaware should freeze they would cross the ice, capture the " ragged rebels " as they derisively termed the Americans, press on to Philadelphia, and seize the " rebel Congress." In truth the Revolution seemed all over. The Congress adjourned to Baltimore, and Washington was left in full charge of the situation, with an army that was on the verge of dissolution. Short enlistments, sickness, bad pay, and continued discouragements,

had done their work to reduce it to the merest shadow of an army. The country too was discouraged and despondent. In this period of darkness and gloom the Howes issued a proclamation as though all were ended. A proclamation that commanded all persons in arms against His Majesty's government, to disband and return home; and all Congresses to desist from treasonable acts; offering a free pardon to all who should comply within fifty days. Copies of this document were distributed through the country, and many citizens daily made their peace and claimed protection. The contrast between the flying Americans in their rags and the brilliant appearance of the British was so great that it was small wonder that the Revolution was deemed at an end.

But so long as Washington lived Liberty could not die. In thinking over the fastnesses of the country where he might retire for a desperate stand, should it become necessary, his mind reverted to the mountainous regions of his early campaigns.

"What think you," he asked of General Mercer who had shared those perils, "if we should retreat to the back parts of Pennsylvania, would the Pennsylvanians support us?"

"If the lower counties gave up the back counties would do the same," answered General Mercer sadly.

"We must retire to Augusta County, Virginia, then," remarked Washington musingly. "Numbers will repair to us for safety, and we will try a predatory war. If overpowered, we must cross the Alleghanies."

Still he waited for the coming of Lee with his force. With their assistance he hoped to be able to attempt a stroke upon the enemy's troops, which lay a good deal scattered, and without intrenchments of any kind; in such utter contempt did they hold the "ragged rebels." "A lucky blow in this quarter,"

wrote Washington to Lee, "would be fatal to them, and would most certainly raise the spirits of the people which are quite sunk by our recent misfortunes."

But Lee, though he had been repeatedly urged to join the Commander-in-Chief, was exceedingly slow in obeying orders. Washington sent express after express to him, but his letters showed a determination to retain his separate command, and hang on, and threaten the British rear.

On the 13th of December Washington received a letter from Lee, who was by this time at Morristown, New Jersey, which said that his troops had been obliged to halt for two days for want of shoes. He was proceeding toward the Delaware, but expressed his preference for his own plan. Amazed at his tardiness in marching to his support, Washington despatched one of his own aides, ordering Lee to join him at once; and telling him again that his coming might be the means of saving Philadelphia. He awaited the result with some impatience. The river must soon freeze, and the crossing of the enemy would put an end to all hope of saving the capital city.

The very next day, however, an express dashed into camp, and excitedly demanded to see the Commander-in-Chief.

"General," he cried as he entered Washington's presence, "I have to inform you that Major-General Lee is a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

"What, sir?" exclaimed Washington. The officers who were present listened in amaze as the man repeated:

"I have to tell you, sir, of the captivation of General Lee."

"And his troops?" asked Washington, an expression almost of despair passing over his countenance. If this division of the army had been taken there was small hope of being able to strike a blow at the enemy.

"The troops are safe, sir. They are advancing under General Sullivan to join you."

"Thank God," murmured the Chief in a tone of heartfelt relief. "Go on, sir, tell us of the matter. How could a general be taken without his troops? Where were his guards?"

"The general left Morristown the day before yesterday, Your Excellency, but marched no further than Vealtown, eight miles distant. Leaving General Sullivan there with the troops he rode to Baskingridge, three miles away, and took quarters at a tavern. As there was not a British cantonment within twenty miles he believed himself perfectly safe.

"During the evening a Tory came to him asking to be paid for a horse which one of the men had impressed by the general's orders. The general was—well—pretty rough with him, and out of revenge the rascally Tory rode twenty miles to where Colonel Harcourt and his dragoons were encamped, telling of General Lee's whereabouts, and that he had few attendants. So yesterday morning, after he had breakfasted and before he was fully dressed, a party of British light-horse, under Colonel Harcourt himself, rode into the yard of the tavern, surrounded the house, and took him prisoner. They would not wait for him to dress, but carried him off, bareheaded, and in his slippers and blanket coat. They took him to New Brunswick, and from thence to New York."

It was the crowning disaster. Defeat after defeat had followed the cause since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Where would it end? The officers gazed at each other in blank dismay. No other officer, except the Commander-in-Chief, possessed in so great a degree the confidence of the army, and of the country. It seemed the greatest calamity that had yet befallen the Americans.

"This will come as a great blow to the country," remarked Washington with never a word of condemnation for the general whose own imprudence had resulted in his capture. "Some decisive stroke must be made against the enemy to counteract the effect of these misfortunes, else the game is pretty nearly up."

"But what can be done, General?" asked Greene who was anxious to retrieve the blunder of Fort Washington. "The British swarm the Jerseys. Their cantonments stretch from Brunswick to the Delaware, and down the river for several miles, to a point below Burlington."

"Now is our time to clip their wings while they are so spread," said Washington. "I have a plan which I will disclose when General Sullivan arrives with Lee's detachment."

A few days later Sullivan marched into camp. His troops were in a miserable plight; destitute of almost everything, many of them fit only for the hospital. The army's numbers were increased, but the difficulties were not lessened. At the same time, however, Colonel John Cadwalader brought in a large volunteer detachment, well equipped, so that Washington had now between five and six thousand troops. Calling a Council of War he communicated a daring plan of attacking all the British posts on the Delaware at the same time. "If he were successful in all, or any of these attacks, he hoped not only to wipe out the impression made by his defeats and retreat, but also to relieve Philadelphia from immediate danger," and to compel the enemy to draw in his cantonments.

A body of Hessians, under Colonel Rahl, was stationed at Trenton, and another, under Count Donop, at Bordentown. Small detachments of English troops were also at Black Horse and Mount Holly. The military stores were at New

Brunswick, and there also was the strongest English detachment.

The force at Trenton numbered about fifteen hundred Hessians and a troop of light-horse. It was Washington's plan to cross the Delaware at McKonkey's Ferry,[1] nine miles above Trenton, and march down upon this force. General Ewing, with a body of Pennsylvania militia, was to cross at the Trenton Ferry, and to secure the bridge below the town, in order to prevent the escape of the enemy by that road. General Cadwalader was to cross and attack Mount Holly; while General Putnam, with the troops engaged in fortifying Philadelphia, was to attack the post under Count Donop.

By Christmas all was in readiness. To each division was assigned its exact part. All divisions were to cross the river at night, so as to be ready for simultaneous action at five o'clock in the morning.

When the time came, however, Generals Ewing and Cadwalader were prevented from crossing by the extreme cold and the masses of ice in the river. Indications of an insurrection in Philadelphia obliged Putnam to remain in that city; so that only Washington and his troops carried out their part of the plan of operations.

With two thousand four hundred hardy veterans and a train of twenty small pieces, Washington repaired to McKonkey's Ferry early on Christmas evening, ready to pass over as soon as it grew dark, expecting to reach the Jersey side by midnight. The river was so full of floating ice that at first it was doubtful whether a crossing could be made at all; but Colonel Glover, with his regiment of Marblehead sailors and fishermen, proved once more equal to the emergency by bringing up the boats in

[1] Now Taylorsville.

spite of the ice. At about sunset the troops began to cross, though it was difficult and perilous work. Not a movement escaped the eye of the tall, solitary figure that stood on the bank watching the embarkation.

Of what was he thinking, the brave, undaunted leader, as he stood there, with the ice-floes crashing against one another in their race down the black and sullen river? Of the disasters of the summer? Of the bitterness of that long retreat? Of the black despair of the winter? Or did his thoughts go back to the long ago when on another December night, twenty-three years before, his boat had been ice-jammed and wrecked in the Alleghany River? He had been near drowning then, on that —his first public service. Was this to be his last? Who could tell? But as his illy-clad, half-starved troops filed past him into the boats, his firm lips contracted into a resolute line. Tatterdemalions, Scarecrows, Ragged Rebels, the British termed them derisively, but beneath the rags the Chief saw the high courage which animated them.

Departure had been taken from the Pennsylvania shore before ten o'clock; but ice, wind, and current made the crossing so laborious that it was not until three o'clock in the morning that all the troops and the artillery were landed on the Jersey side, and the march down the river was not commenced until nearly four. Trenton was nine miles distant, and to surprise the enemy by daybreak was now out of the question, but Washington resolved to push forward, and " trust to Providence."

At Yardley's Ferry the force divided; a division under General Sullivan keeping to the road along the river, intending to enter Trenton from the south, while the main division took the crossroad, so as to come out on the north of the town. The plan was to attack at the instant of arrival, and, after driving

in the outposts, to press rapidly after them into the town, and prevent the main body from forming.

It began to hail and snow as the troops commenced their march, and increased in violence as they advanced, the storm driving the sleet in their faces. But weary, besoaked, and well-nigh frozen the Continentals trudged valiantly forward.

Brave Hearts of Oak! that Freedom might live they were enduring hardships worse than death. The snow was stained blood-red by their footprints; the wind whistled through their rags, and the sleet beat upon their half-naked bodies; and they were so weary that some of them lay down by the roadside and died. Yet that they, and their children, and their children's children might enjoy the blessings of Liberty they toiled on. And on!

The storm ceased as the winter daylight broke, and Sullivan halted at the crossroad, dismayed to discover that the snow had rendered many of the muskets wet and useless. He despatched an officer to apprise Washington of the condition of the arms, and to ask what he should do.

"Return instantly to General Sullivan, and tell him to advance and charge with the bayonet. The town must be taken," thundered the Commander-in-Chief, indignant that having come so far there could be even a question of what to do.

So silently had the divisions marched that they reached the outskirts of the village without alarming the enemy. As they drew near the town, Washington, who was in front, came to a man who was chopping wood by the roadside, and inquired:

"Which way is the Hessian picket?"

"I don't know," was the surly reply.

"You may tell," said Captain Forest of the artillery, "for this is General Washington."

The aspect of the man changed in an instant. Raising his hands to Heaven, he cried: "God bless and prosper you, sir! The picket is in that house, and the sentry stands near that tree."

"Dislodge them," commanded Washington to the advance guard.

Instantly the charge was made. The picket fell back, behaving well though they were completely surprised. Crying, "The enemy! the enemy! turn out! turn out!" they kept up a constant retreating fire from behind houses. Three minutes later a desultory fire from the south showed that Sullivan had attacked the lower end of the town. The Hessian drums beat to arms, and the wildest confusion prevailed. Some artillerists attempted to wheel two guns into position for a battery, with the purpose of checking the advance of the patriots until their troops could form.

At this, Captain William Washington, and Lieutenant James Monroe,[1] with a small party rushed forward, drove the artillery-men from the guns, and took the two pieces just as they were on the point of being fired. By this time Colonel Rahl had marshalled his Hessians into battle order, and they charged bravely. The Americans answered their fire with a scathing volley, quickly followed by the roar of Forest's battery, which unlimbered and opened fire. Colonel Rahl fell, mortally wounded, and all order was at an end. Seeing their commander fall, the Hessians broke, and endeavored to escape to the east road through an orchard. Checking the charge Washington threw Steven's brigade and Hand's riflemen, now reinforced, out through the fields, heading them off. Flight in that direction being impossible, they turned toward the town,

[1] Afterward President of the United States.

only to find that Sullivan's troops blocked that outlet. Forest's field-pieces were pushed forward, Washington riding with them, heedless of the enemy's fire, though the shot was flying all about him. All at once the enemy came to a stand. Believing that they were forming in order of battle, Washington ordered a discharge of canister shot.

"Sir," cried Captain Forest as he made ready to obey, "they have struck!"

"Struck?" echoed Washington.

"Yes, sir; their colors are down, and they have grounded their arms."

"So they have," exclaimed the Chief, spurring toward them.

Colonel Rahl, the brave commander of the Hessians, who had been mortally wounded, rose at his approach, and supported by a file of sergeants, presented his sword.

"Let him be carried to his quarters, and his wounds attended to," directed the Commander-in-Chief as soon as this ceremony was over.

At this moment Major Wilkinson, who was with the lower column, rode up for orders for Sullivan. Washington grasped him by the hand, exclaiming:

"Major Wilkinson, this is a great day for our country!"

It was in very truth. The news flew like wild-fire over the Nation, cheering despondent hearts, giving Liberty's cause a new lease of life, showing the timid that the dreaded Hessians could be beaten as well as the British themselves, and that with Washington in charge America could still dare to hope for freedom.

At the first alarm, about six hundred light-horse and infantry, which had been so stationed in the lower end of Trenton

that they could slip away, fled to Bordentown. These would have fallen into Washington's hands had not the ice prevented General Ewing from crossing at the Trenton Ferry as had been planned. The troops under Count Donop at Bordentown might also have been captured, if Cadwalader could have crossed with his force at Bristol. As it was there were nearly a thousand prisoners taken in the affair, of which thirty-two were officers. It took a day to get them safely beyond the Delaware; for Washington dared not linger in Trenton with the force of Donop below him, and a strong British battalion at Princeton. His troops too were exhausted after the terrible exposure and fatigue they had undergone, and were in need of rest. Therefore he recrossed the Delaware, and took up his old position upon its right bank.

And while the patriots were rejoicing at the victory of Trenton, Howe was struck with consternation and dismay. He had believed that the power of the Revolution was crushed. He had considered Washington's situation desperate, his army broken and without prospect of reinforcements. It was the dead of winter, and the spirits of the people seemed sunk to the lowest point of despondency. Under such circumstances, " that three old established regiments of a people who made war their profession, should lay down their arms to a ragged, undisciplined militia," was a matter of amazement. Cornwallis, who was on the eve of departing for England, was sent back to Jersey in all haste; and the British forces there were as much concentrated in the direction of Trenton as circumstances would permit.

Meantime Washington, after giving his troops a much needed rest, once more crossed the river, and reoccupied Trenton. He was induced to take this risk by the word brought to

him that Count Donop, who commanded the troops below Trenton, on hearing of the disaster that had befallen Colonel Rahl and his troops, had retreated to Princeton. Washington therefore determined to recross and then make such offensive movements against the British as prudence should dictate. Generals Cadwalader, Mifflin, and Ewing crossed over also, with orders to harass the enemy, but to hazard nothing until joined by the Continental battalions.

By the 1st of January Washington had five thousand men at Trenton, but they were still inferior to the forces under Cornwallis advancing to meet him. And now Congress, aroused to the needs of the situation, invested him with almost dictatorial powers, but the time for action was short.

Early on the morning of the 2nd of January Washington was advised that Cornwallis was approaching with a strong force of British regulars, and took a position on the south side of the Assunpink, a creek which ran through the town, upon high ground extending eastward from a small bridge that spanned the stream. The van of Cornwallis's army did not appear until nearly sunset, having been harassed in their march by strong parties sent out under Greene. Cornwallis formed his army, and attempted to cross the bridge and the two fords, but was three times repulsed by the American cannon. Each time the enemy was driven back there was a shout along the American lines. At length, the British, finding all the fords guarded, drew off, and lighted their camp-fires. The Americans kindled theirs likewise, and a cannonade was kept up by both sides until dark.

Sir William Erskine, who was with Cornwallis, urged him to attack Washington that evening. "Otherwise, my lord," said he, "Washington, if any general, will make a move to the

left of your army, and throw a large body of troops on the road to your left."

"Pooh!" said Cornwallis, "the game is run to cover at last. Mr. Washington cannot escape. My troops have marched fifteen miles to-day. They are weary, and need rest so as to be ready for hard fighting. To-morrow will see the closing struggle of this rebellion. We will be sure to bag the fox in the morning."

While this conversation was taking place in the British camp, Washington anxiously meditated on the situation. His position was perilous in the extreme. It was, past all doubt, the intention of the enemy to attack him in full force the next day. They were vastly superior in numbers and discipline to his own raw, inexperienced troops. An engagement with them would be too hazardous, as would also be a retreat across the Delaware. The latter would leave the Jerseys in possession of the enemy, and would again sink the country into a state of despondency. All at once a resource presented itself. Why not leave the Delaware altogether; and, by an indirect route, march upon Princeton, and attack the few troops left in that place; then push on rapidly to Brunswick where the enemy's baggage and stores lay under a weak guard? "This would save his army from being cut off; would avoid the appearance of defeat; and might draw the enemy away from Trenton; while some fortunate stroke might give additional lustre to the American arms. Even should the enemy march on to Philadelphia, it could not in any case be prevented; while a counter-blow in the Jerseys would be a great consolation."[1]

The plan was received by his officers with enthusiasm; for they were eager to dare any bold enterprise. There was one

[1] Washington Irving.

difficulty, however: the weather having been for two days warm, moist, and foggy, the ground had become so soft as to become impassable. But Providence favored the manœuvre; for even while the Council of War still sat, the wind veered suddenly to the northwest; the weather became intensely cold, and by the time the troops were ready to move the roads were hard as pavements. The baggage and ordnance were at once sent to Burlington for security; the Commander-in-Chief ordered the camp-fires to be kept burning, and the patrols to keep up their accustomed rounds. Other men were to dig trenches near the bridge within hearing of the British sentries. In fact, all the appearance of an encampment was to be maintained. At day-break the men so engaged were directed to leave everything and join the army.

At one o'clock in the morning, with great silence and order, Washington withdrew his army from Trenton, and took his march along a new road toward Princeton, ten miles distant. Progress was slow, owing to the roughness of the road. Many were bruised by stumbling over the stumps of trees, and some of the wheels of the baggage-trains were broken; so that it was nearly sunrise when the army reached the bridge over Stony Brook, about three miles from Princeton. After crossing the bridge Washington detached General Mercer to take possession of the bridge on the main road to Trenton, so as to intercept any fugitives from Princeton, or to check any back movement from the rear of Cornwallis's army. He himself with the main body took a by-road which was said to be a short cut to Princeton.

Three regiments, the Seventeenth, the Fortieth, and the Fifty-fifth, with three troops of dragoons, had been left in Princeton by Cornwallis with orders to join him in the morn-

ing. The Seventeenth, under Colonel Mahwood, was already on the march. It was a clear and cold morning, and the landscape was radiant with a heavy hoarfrost that sparkled and glistened in hues and tints of vari-colored jewels. The brilliant sunshine played upon the arms of Mercer's troops as they wound through the woods on their way to the bridge on the main road, and their glitter discovered them to the Seventeenth which had attained the summit of a hill about a quarter of a mile distant. They immediately faced about, and under cover of the woods, recrossed the bridge over Stony Brook, just as Mercer reached it. Both parties put their forces in a run to get possession of a rising ground on the right near the house of a Mr. Clark, a Quaker. Mercer's men, having the advantage of light accoutrements and little baggage, reached it first, and formed back of a hedge fence from behind which they poured a deadly volley into the advancing British. It was quickly returned by the enemy. At the first discharge the gray horse that Mercer was riding was crippled in the fore-leg, and the General was forced to dismount. The British fired again and charged with the bayonet. The Americans had no time to reload their rifles, and having no defensive weapons, broke as the Seventeenth charged again with fixed bayonets, and fled in great disorder. General Mercer gallantly tried to rally them, when a blow from the butt end of a musket felled him to the ground. Almost instantly his rank was discovered, and an exulting shout rang out from the enemy for they believed that they had captured the Commander-in-Chief. They leaped forward to capture him.

"The rebel general is taken! The rebel general is taken!" Several rushed to the spot exclaiming, "Call for quarter, you rebel!"

" I am not a rebel," cried Mercer indignantly, though a half-dozen bayonets were at his breast; and instead of calling for quarter he drew his sword, determined to die fighting. Scarcely had he made a movement, however, when he was bayoneted repeatedly, and left for dead.

The flying Americans had reached the brow of the hill, pursued by Colonel Mahwood, when a large force of Pennsylvania militia, which Washington, on hearing the firing, had sent to Mercer's aid, emerged from the wood. Mahwood instantly brought his artillery to play upon them, and the militia came to a stand.

At this opportune moment, Washington himself galloped upon the field. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed past the wavering militia, waving his hat, and calling:

" Charge 'em, boys! "

The effect was electrical. The militia cheered lustily, and advanced in a run. At the same time the 7th Virginia came up, and charged with the militia, while Captain Moulder of the American artillery opened fire from a battery on a ridge to the south.

For a short time the action was desperate. The Seventeenth fought with great bravery, and the roar of artillery was incessant. As though he were placed there as a target Washington stood, within thirty yards of the enemy, and well in advance of his own men, exposed to the fire from both sides. For a moment, as rifles and artillery belched forth their fire, a dense cloud of smoke enveloped him, as he was lost to view. Fitzgerald, one of his aides, a young and ardent Irishman, dropped the reins upon his horse's neck, and drew his hat over his eyes that he might not see him die. Slowly the mass of dust and smoked lifted. The aide ventured to look. Lo, there was Wash-

ington unharmed, waving his hat as his men broke into cheers; for the enemy were broken and flying. Instantly Fitzgerald spurred to his Chief's side.

"Thank God," he cried, "Your Excellency is safe," and burst into tears of joy.

Washington grasped his hand affectionately, then cried, "Away, my dear Colonel, and bring up the troops. The day is our own!"

In the meantime, the Fifty-fifth, hearing the firing, tried to come to the rescue of the Seventeenth, but a New England regiment encountered it, and held it in check until Washington came up with his force. After some sharp fighting, it was routed, and a part fled toward New Brunswick. The rest fell back upon the Fortieth, which had taken little part in the action, and both retreated into the town, taking possession of the college building, hoping to make a stand there. Washington drew up his artillery, however, and commenced to fire upon the building. The British immediately abandoned the building, and the greater part of them became prisoners. A few saved themselves by a precipitate flight to New Brunswick.

More than a hundred British were left dead in the field, while nearly three hundred were taken prisoners, of whom fourteen were officers. The loss of the Americans was about thirty men, and several officers. Among these latter were General Mercer and Colonel Haslet, and other valuable officers whose loss was universally regretted.

It had been part of the plan to push on to New Brunswick, should the attack on Princeton be successful, and capture the British stores and baggage there. It would be a rich prize, and make the triumph of the Americans complete, but the army were exhausted and fatigued almost to the limit of endurance.

The troops had been without sleep for one night, some of them for two, and were half starved. It was still eighteen miles to New Brunswick, and Cornwallis was in hot pursuit. He would be upon them before they could reach Brunswick, and his troops would be fresh. Washington, therefore, ceased his pursuit of the fugitive regiments, turned off at Kingston, about three miles northeast of Princeton, and breaking down the bridges behind him, took the road leading up country to Pluckamin, where he arrived that evening. Allowing the troops time for rest and refreshment he moved rapidly on to a strong position near Morristown, where he went into camp to rest and to gather strength.

At Trenton, in the meantime, Cornwallis was up betimes to "bag his fox." He was alarmed and astonished to find the patriot camp entirely deserted; and no one seemed to know where the Americans had gone. In the midst of his inquiries the booming of cannon was heard, and, though it was midwinter, he thought it was the rumble of distant thunder. But Sir William Erskine decided otherwise, and exclaimed: "To arms, my lord! Washington has outgeneraled us. Let us fly to the rescue of Princeton!"

Mortified that he had been so out-manœuvred Cornwallis broke up camp forthwith, and made a rapid march toward Princeton. He saw what Washington's plan was, and was alarmed for the safety of his stores at Brunswick. It was thirty miles from Trenton to New Brunswick, but the royal troops marched all day, without halting longer than necessary to repair the bridges broken down by the patriots, but Cornwallis was eager to overtake the Continentals. He arrived at Brunswick at sunset, and found his stores safe. But he had not bagged his fox.

As the tidings of the brilliant little winter campaign swept over the country the people went wild with joy. The Revolution had been all but dead. But in its darkest hour, out of the blackness of perpetual defeat, the indomitable spirit of one man had snatched a victory that reanimated the hearts of his countrymen, and filled the Nation with renewed hope and courage. All Europe rang with his exploits, and the name of Washington was upon every lip. He was the wonder not only of Americans, but of the world as well. That this man, a mere provincial, to whom England in her pride refused the title of general, should, with his little band of half-clad, half-starved, barefooted men, turn on an enemy, superior in numbers and discipline, supplied with every requisite of war, and out-manœuvre its generals, and deal such blows as Trenton and Princeton, filled the statesmen and generals of Europe with admiration and amazement.

Frederick the Great of Prussia declared that the achievements of Washington and his little band of compatriots, between December 25th and the 4th of January, were the most brilliant of any recorded in the annals of military achievements. "Washington was everywhere proclaimed the equal of the most renowned commanders of antiquity, and was especially distinguished by the name of the AMERICAN FABIUS." [1]

[1] Carlo Botta, "Story of the War for Independence of America."

CHAPTER XXII

The Turn of the Tide

IT had been Washington's intention to make but a short stay at Morristown to allow his wearied troops time to rest; but so well adapted was the place for a permanent encampment that he took up his position there for the winter. The camp was in a rough and mountainous country, easily held, with the addition of a few intrenchments to the strong natural barriers. There was also a fine country in his rear from which he could freely draw supplies, and he was able to retreat across the Delaware, if needful.

He was anxious to drive the British out of the Jerseys, and in this his detachments were aided by the Jerseyites themselves. The whole country had become hostile to the British, rendered so by the treatment they had received at their hands. Howe's printed protections, in which he had promised safety to those who remained quietly at home and took no part in the war, had proved of no avail, and the Hessians either could not, or would not understand them, and plundered friend and foe alike. Whig and Tory were subjected to ravage without distinction, and so brutal were the outrages committed that the whole state was in a blaze of wrath, eager to avenge their personal injuries.

The Americans were unwearied in their activities, scouring the country in small parties to seize on stragglers, waylay foraging parties, and to keep the enemy closely confined in their own lines. So well did Washington carry on this system of annoyance that the situation of the British became very irksome, and by degrees their troops were drawn in until all the English forces in New Jersey were collected in the two posts of New Brunswick and Amboy. This latter place kept open their communication with New York from which city they were compelled to draw their supplies.

As the enemy drew in their troops Washington gradually extended his cantonments until they stretched from Princeton, on the right, under General Putnam, to the Highlands, on the left, under General Heath. This made it possible for him to move quickly either toward the Delaware River or to the Hudson, as the movements of Howe might make necessary.

All at once the camp was attacked by a more insidious foe than the British, for the smallpox—that dreaded plague of the eighteenth century—broke out violently. It had been prevalent the previous year, and Washington feared that now it might sweep through the whole army. Immediately he took steps to prevent such a catastrophe. The main army was hutted in a sheltered valley, called Lowantica Valley, from the Indian name of the beautiful brook which ran through it, and the well remained here while the sufferers were taken to a church in the village. Other houses were set aside as hospitals, and then Washington caused the soldiers to be inoculated to prevent the spread of the disease. Into their care he threw himself with so much tenderness that the hearts of his men were drawn to him in an affection that nothing thereafter could disturb. In fact, at all times, he exercised a fatherly solicitude

for their welfare. An encampment of soldiers is a man's world, and men ofttimes grow rough and lax in morals unless care is taken to prevent it. Washington tried to guard against every appearance of evil, and to the end had the love and confidence of every soldier in the ranks.

Being too weak to strike an effective blow at the enemy he now put forth every energy to prepare for the summer's campaign. All his officers who could be spared were scattered through the country to recruit, while he himself wrote stirring appeals to the governors of the several States and to Congress.

"Nothing but the united effort of every State in America can save us from ruin," he wrote. "Our success must depend on a firm union, and a strict adherence to the general plan."

The responses were slow, however. A strong central government was wanting, and was sorely needed. Washington was expected to meet the well-equipped forces of Great Britain with a handful of men, lacking in everything. As if a general, though he were a Cæsar and a Hannibal combined, could fight without soldiers, or equipment.

While he was thus anxiously exerting himself to strengthen the army, he was also remonstrating with Howe concerning the treatment accorded the American prisoners of war. The British considered them as rebels deserving punishment, and not entitled to even human treatment. So cruel, so infamous was this treatment that the most intense indignation was felt throughout America. It was scarcely believable that one civilized nation would inflict upon another, their brothers in blood, the inhumanities that the Americans in the prison-ships in the Harbor of New York, and in the jails in the city suffered. Brave and hot-headed Ethan Allen languished in

prison, chained as a common felon; General Charles Lee, though he had resigned his commission in the British army before joining that of America, was treated as a deserter and threatened with trial. Howe denied that the prisoners were treated with severity, promising to look into the matter. As nothing came of it he probably did not concern himself, and there was no change for the better. There had been, it is true, some exchange of prisoners before the capture of Lee, but his captivity interrupted the arrangement. The English, however, began to care less about keeping him after the affairs of Trenton and Princeton. They thought the Revolution would collapse with his capture, but they had found out that all of the military genius of America had not been taken with him. It was not until the Americans began to retaliate upon the English prisoners that the sufferings of American prisoners were lessened.

The month of March brought balmy weather, and toward its end the North River was clear of ice. Howe opened the campaign by sending a detachment up the river to Peekskill, about fifty miles above New York, to destroy the stores which the Americans had collected there to supply the needs of the stations in the vicinity. He was only partially successful, however, as Colonel McDougall, who was in charge of the post, was warned of his coming in time to remove part of the stores. The rest were set fire to on the approach of the British, and they completed their destruction.

Toward the last of April, Tryon, now a Major-General of Provincials, landed on the shore of Connecticut with two thousand British troops and Tories. He pressed inland to Danbury, where he not only destroyed the public stores deposited there, but wantonly burned the town, and committed savage

atrocities upon the defenceless inhabitants. But the militia rose, and, under the direction of Generals Arnold, Silliman, and Wooster, who were in the State at the time on recruiting duty, pressed him so hard that it was with difficulty the marauders gained their ships, leaving three hundred killed, wounded, and prisoners behind them. It was a raid that Howe did not care to repeat.

The loss of the stores at Danbury was a great blow to the patriots. Not only did they contain military and hospital supplies, but there were seventeen hundred tents which had been prepared for the use of Washington's army in the ensuing campaign. A loss which could not be replaced before they were needed.

A little later the spirits of the Americans were raised from the depression into which these losses had sunk them, by a gallant exploit conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel Meigs, of New Haven. In retaliation for the Danbury and Peekskill episodes he crossed the Sound in the night, marched to Sag Harbor, where the British had some stores guarded by ships and a company on foot, burned the brigs and sloops lying at the wharf, destroyed the stores, and carried off ninety prisoners, reaching the Connecticut shore in safety, having accomplished the whole enterprise in twenty-five hours. This valiant exploit had a cheering effect upon the people.

The scope of the war was widening. The Loyalists forming into companies, attached themselves to the British side, and began a partisan warfare that grew in bitterness as the war progressed. There were, too, inroads into the States which lay along the seaboard by the fleet which gave the British the advantage of going where they wished. Worst of all, General Burgoyne had arrived in Quebec with a large force with which

it was evidently his intention to move down Lake Champlain and Lake George, and penetrate to the Hudson River, thereby threatening to cut off the New England States from the rest of the country. It was the old plan which Washington had feared from the beginning of the war. Should Burgoyne reach the Hudson, General Howe was to coöperate with him by moving up the river, and attempt to possess himself of the forts and high grounds commanding the passage of the river. The old plan, and a fine plan; should it succeed it would go far toward putting an end to the Revolution. Failing to accomplish the entrance to the Hudson, Burgoyne might turn aside to the New England States, and join Howe at New York by sea, in which event the combined armies would proceed against Philadelphia.

Washington was puzzled as to how best combat these designs of the enemy with his small army. There were the three great points to be defended: "Ticonderoga, the Highlands of the Hudson, and Philadelphia, and to oppose two powerful armies so much superior to him in arms, in numbers, and in discipline, it was necessary to make an arrangement of the troops as would enable the parts to help each other." Much attention was given to strengthening the fortifications on the Hudson, and the troops of New England and New York were divided between Ticonderoga and Peekskill, while those from the Southern Colonies were to assemble at the camp in Jersey.

As soon as the roads were passable, Cornwallis marched the garrison from Brunswick up the Raritan, and succeeded in driving a detachment of Continentals back into the Jersey hills, and then fell back into his old position. Toward the end of May, Howe having received from England reinforcements of British troops and German mercenaries, a needed supply of

tents and camp equipage, moved his headquarters to New Brunswick, and everything indicated that he intended to push through the Jerseys to Philadelphia. Washington immediately concentrated the Northern forces on the Hudson; posted a strong division under General Arnold upon the west bank of the Delaware, and moved from Morristown to Middlebrook, within ten miles of New Brunswick. It was a strong position, commanding a wide view of the surrounding country, so that no movement of the enemy could escape his observation.

And now there began a game of wits between the English and American commanders. Howe's main object was to capture Philadelphia, but first he wished to draw Washington into an open engagement upon the plains, where every advantage would be with the royal army. It would be sheer folly to leave such an army in his rear, and Washington's position was too strong to be forced without great loss of life. With this end in view he made several feints as though to pass by the American camp, and march to the Delaware, hoping to lure Washington from his stronghold into battle. But the latter refused to take the bait, well knowing that Howe would not jeopardize his communications with New York. He was not strong enough to meet the enemy in open field. His whole force fit for duty was now about seven thousand, three hundred men. He could not hazard a general engagement, but he could annoy and harass the enemy, and several skirmishes took place; some of them rather severe.

After one of these feints, the British faced about quickly, and tried to surprise the Americans by a quick march upon their encampment, only to find them posted along a strong piece of ground, fully prepared for a conflict. Although the British outnumbered the Continentals almost twice over, the deadly

shooting of the latter had been so often experienced that Howe dared not assault their position.

Suddenly Howe brought in all his outlying camp, and retreated to Amboy, even sending some troops over to Staten Island, as though about to leave New Jersey. Hoping to reap some advantage while this move was in progress, Washington sent strong detachments after the retreating enemy, and moved his whole force to Quibbletown,[1] five or six miles from Middlebrook. This was exactly what Howe wanted, and, accordingly, on the night of the 25th of June, he suddenly recalled his troops from Staten Island and Amboy, and early the next morning marched rapidly toward the American lines, hoping to cut off their retreat to Middlebrook, and thus force Washington into a general action. Washington was on the alert, however, and reached his strong position again. Several warm skirmishes took place between the advance guard of the British and the rear guard of the Americans, but neither party suffered much. Convinced that he could not reach the capital city across the Jerseys, Howe withdrew his whole army from New Jersey to New York. And Washington had saved Philadelphia without fighting a battle.

The very next day an express from Schuyler gave Washington the intelligence that Burgoyne was advancing against Ticonderoga, and that a detachment of British troops, Canadians, and Indians, led by Sir John Johnson was to penetrate by Oswego to the Mohawk River, and place itself between Fort Stanwix and Fort Edward. The force at Ticonderoga might be sufficient for its defence, but he himself had no troops with which to oppose the inroad of Sir John Johnson, and he urged reinforcements.

[1] Now New Market.

Almost at the same time Washington had information that the British ships were fitting up with three weeks' supply of provisions which would seem to indicate that a much longer voyage than up the North River was intended. Howe might be planning to join Burgoyne through the Eastern States, and Washington warned their governors to be on guard against invasion. Or he might be intending a dash for Philadelphia by way of the Delaware or Chesapeake Bays. Or the whole movement might be a feint to induce Washington to move his troops in such a manner that Howe might make a quick sail up the North River without encountering the entire American army.

War is a game in which to successfully oppose one's adversary, a general must know what that adversary is going to do. Washington was sorely puzzled as to Howe's intentions. In order to make the best of the situation, and to be prepared to meet any of the plans that Howe might have in mind, he reinforced the Northern army, strengthened the posts on the Hudson, had obstructions placed in the Delaware River, advanced Sullivan's division to Pompton Plains, and moved with the main army to Morristown, leaving Middlebrook too well guarded for Howe to seize it.

Other intelligence from the North confirmed the opinion that Howe's main object was to effect a junction with Burgoyne; so Washington ordered Sullivan to Peekskill, and he himself moved to Pompton Plains, and shortly afterward to Smith's Clove, where he determined to remain until the enemy's designs should be disclosed. A gleam of sunshine came now to brighten this period of anxiety in shape of news that Lieutenant-Colonel Barton of the Rhode Island militia had captured General Prescott, who had charge of the British forces in

Rhode Island. Deeming himself secure in an island whose surrounding waters were entirely guarded by cruisers the general had imprudently indulged himself in quarters some distance from camp, and was captured.

It was glad tidings to Washington and the nation, because it was believed that General Lee could now be liberated as there was an officer of equal rank to offer in exchange for him. And the soldiers of the army, around their camp-fires, laughed when the story was told to hear that a negro, using his head as a battering-ram, had butted through the door of Prescott's bedroom.

The army was still laughing at this exploit when, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, came the news that Ticonderoga, the key to the Northern country, had been evacuated by General St. Clair and the garrison. The matter was incomprehensible until a letter from General Schuyler explained it: Sugar Hill, an eminence commanding Ticonderoga, had been deemed inaccessible and out of range, and so had not been fortified by the Americans. The British had scaled it, however, and naming it Fort Defiance, proceeded to prove that it was NOT out of range by throwing cannon balls directly into Fort Ticonderoga. The garrison had either to surrender, or to evacuate; they chose the latter.

Skirmishing all the way the fugitives had retreated to Skeenesborough,[1] which was in turn taken by Burgoyne. The Americans retreated to Fort Ann where Schuyler had gone to meet them. Washington sent as many troops as he could to reinforce Schuyler, and also sent General Lincoln to rally the New England people to his support.

Meantime the British fleet had put to sea leaving Washing-

[1] Now Whitehall.

ton still uncertain as to its destination. Some days later it was seen off the Capes of the Delaware, and of course it was expected that it would sail up that river for Philadelphia. Washington marched his army at once to Germantown, near Philadelphia, and he himself went to Chester. To his great surprise the fleet disappeared again. It might have returned to New York to go up the Hudson, or it might have gone to New England with a view of effecting a junction with Burgoyne. He immediately sent pressing messages to the governors of the Eastern States to reinforce Schuyler with all their militia, while he himself detached Morgan with his riflemen and other choice troops to the Northern army, thus weakening himself. As Schuyler wished another general to aid him Washington sent him Arnold.

While anxiously waiting for further news of the fleet Washington spent several days in Philadelphia consulting with Congress regarding public measures, and making himself familiar with the city and the surrounding country, and directing the building of fortifications on the river. During this time he met with the Marquis de Lafayette, a young Frenchman who had heard the story of America's wrongs, and, filled with an ardent desire to aid her in her struggle for liberty, had come from France to place his purse and sword at her service.

There were many foreigners who had come to offer their services to Congress, and while some of them were really sincere in their desire to aid America, others were mere adventurers without merit. Washington saw that Lafayette was different, and taking him aside, for they had met at a dinner, paid him a just tribute for his disinterestedness, and asked him to make headquarters his home. An invitation which the young nobleman accepted with delight. He removed there the very next

day, and a friendship, tender, true, and lasting, sprang up at once between him and the Chief.

But what had become of the fleet? That was the question that troubled Washington. At length his anxiety was allayed by the information that Howe had entered the Chesapeake, and he immediately prepared to march to meet him. Just before leaving camp all hearts were gladdened by the news of the success of the Americans at Bennington, in the Hampshire Grants.[1] For Burgoyne had found it necessary to pause at Fort Edward to get supplies for his army, having been cut off from them by the impediments which Schuyler had thrown in his way; so, learning that the Americans had accumulated considerable stores, including live cattle and vehicles of various kinds, at Bennington, he had detached Colonel Baum with a force of six or eight hundred dragoons to get them. The militia of New England rose, and, under General Stark, went forward to meet the Hessians. Colonel Baum, finding the country rising against him, stopped and intrenched himself in a strong position above the Wollamsac River, against which Stark and his men advanced. As the firing began, Stark wheeled and faced his men.

"Boys," he said, "yonder are the Hessians. They bought them for $36.10 apiece to fight us. If you are worth more than they are, to-day is the time to show it." Then drawing his sword he cried: "We must win to-day, or Molly Stark's a widow."

There had come a howl of laughter from the men, and they threw themselves against the works with so much vim that the German commander exclaimed:

"They fight like demons; not like men."

[1] Now Vermont.

The Hessians, after fightning bravely for two hours, were compelled to abandon the intrenchments, and fled, leaving their baggage and artillery behind them.

"Hurrah!" shouted Alexander Hamilton as Washington read this part of the despatch. He had become an aide the April previous. A smile illumined Washington's face as he heard the boyish shout.

"If General Burgoyne continues to send forth detachments," he remarked, "Schuyler will have him in a cul de sac from which he cannot escape. Give orders that the troops are to make the best appearance possible on the march through the city, Mr. Hamilton."

There had been many signs of disaffection in Philadelphia, and Washington had decided to parade his army through it to impress the citizens. The men did the best they could, but it was a hard matter for the poor fellows who had no uniforms, or at best but a motley array of them. Many were without coats, and some without shoes; some too were in civilian clothing, but the hunting shirt of brown linen or leather was the predominant garb; their guns were as varied as their clothes. A faint attempt to give uniformity was made by each man sticking a sprig of green in his hat to make up for the defect of regimentals, and the drums and fifes did their best. Clothes do not always make the man, and the hearts of the rank and file beat high with patriotic zeal and devotion to the cause in which they were engaged. The people were awed by the long columns and the grave aspect of the soldiers. As the tall form of the Commander-in-Chief passed they cheered lustily. Across the Schuylkill he led his troops, and on to Wilmington to await the landing of the enemy.

And on the 25th of August Howe landed his troops about

six miles below Head of Elk, a small town in Maryland.[1] He was now seventy miles from Philadelphia, ten miles further from that city than he had been at Brunswick, but he had chosen this route because he expected to find many loyalists among the people of Delaware and Pennsylvania. The country was in a great state of alarm, and Howe issued a proclamation promising that private property should be respected, and offering pardon and protection to all who should submit to him. A promise that quieted the excitement of the people.

Heavy rains and the want of horses prevented him from moving forward until the 3rd of September; and in the meantime, the whole American army took a position behind Red Clay Creek, on the road leading from the British camp to Philadelphia. In this position Washington determined to await the coming of the enemy; for he had made up his mind to risk a battle in the open field.

His force at this time was about fifteen thousand men, but from sickness and other causes the effective force, militia included, did not exceed eleven thousand, most of whom were poorly armed and equipped. The strength of the British was computed at eighteen thousand, but not more than fifteen thousand were brought into action.

Though Washington's troops were inferior to the enemy in numbers, equipments, and discipline, they were, on the whole, in much better shape to meet the British than they had been; and public opinion called for a battle. It would be much better to fight and be defeated than to let Philadelphia, at that time the capital city of the States. fall without a blow.

On the 8th, the enemy advanced, and a flank movement convinced Washington that it was Howe's design to turn his

[1] Now Elkton.

right flank, and cut off his communication with Philadelphia. He immediately changed his ground, and, crossing the Brandywine in the night, encamped on high grounds behind that river. On the same evening the enemy moved to Kennet Square, about seven miles from the American position.

The Brandywine was a small stream which emptied into the Delaware at Wilmington. The main body of the American army was posted on the heights north of Chadd's Ford, where it was expected the British would attempt a passage. There were a number of fords, but Chadd's was in the direct route to Philadelphia, so Washington made it the centre of his position. Greene's division, composed of Muhlenberg's and Weedon's brigades, occupied a position in the rear of the heights, and was to act as a reserve to aid either wing of the army. Wayne's division and Proctor's artillery were posted on the brow of an eminence immediately above the ford. Maxwell's light-infantry were thrown in the advance, south of the Brandywine, and posted on high ground each side of the road leading to the ford.

General Armstrong with the Pennsylvania militia formed the left wing, and was stationed about a mile and a half below the main body to guard the lower fords. The right wing of the army commanded by Sullivan, and composed of his division and those of Stirling and Stephen, extended for two miles along the upper reaches of the Brandywine. The river was now the only obstacle between the two armies.

On the morning of the 11th of September, soon after day, information was received that the whole British army was in motion, advancing over the direct road leading over Chadd's Ford. Washington placed his army immediately under arms, and then rode along the lines encouraging his troops and striving to stimulate them to the greatest exertions. To animate

them he told of the pleasing news that the detachment under St. Leger which Burgoyne had sent to demolish Fort Stanwix had been routed by General Arnold and General Gansevoort. And that while the militia had been ambushed at Oriskany, the enemy had been made to flee in all directions by the later battle. He did not tell them, however, a piece of news that had pained him greatly: that Congress had taken the command of the Northern army from the noble-hearted Schuyler, and given it to General Gates. Though he had been much perturbed Washington accepted the change without comment, and did not fail to stand by Gates. The troops were soon to find to their sorrow that Congress had also undertaken to remodel the Commissary Department of the army, and by so doing threw it into confusion for a whole year. It was no time to tell anything but pleasant tidings, for Washington wished his men to do their best.

The right of the British was under General Knyphausen; the left, under command of Lord Cornwallis. General Howe was with this wing. Skirmishing soon commenced between the advanced parties; and, by ten o'clock, Maxwell's corps, with little loss on either side, was driven over the Brandywine. Knyphausen paraded on the heights opposite, ordered some artillery to be placed on the most advantageous points, and a cannonade was carried on with the American batteries beyond the ford. He seemed about to try to force the passage of the ford, and the patriots made ready to receive the charge.

Toward noon came an express from Sullivan, with a note received from a scouting party, reporting that General Howe, with a large body of troops and a park of artillery, was pushing up the Lancaster road, doubtless to cross at the upper fords, and turn the right flank of the American position.

Startled by the information, Washington instantly sent off Colonel Bland, with a party of horse, to reconnoitre above the forks and find out the truth of the report. He sorely missed Morgan and his riflemen in scouting. In the meantime, he resolved to cross the ford, attack the division in front of him with his whole force, and rout it before the other could arrive. He gave orders for both wings to coöperate, when, as Sullivan was preparing to cross, counter-intelligence was received that the movement of the British was a feint, and that after making demonstrations of crossing the forks of the Brandywine, the enemy had marched down the southern side of the river to reunite with Knyphausen. Other reports said that there was no enemy in that quarter. Kept in suspense by this conflicting information Washington abandoned the meditated attack upon Knyphausen at Chadd's Ford until positive intelligence could be obtained. These contradictory and confusing reports were due to his raw and unpractised scouts, the densely wooded state of the country which rendered it hard to trace the movements of the enemy, and to the disaffected inhabitants who did not care to give information of the movements of the British.

Presently there came a man of the neighborhood, Thomas Cheyney by name, spurring in all haste, the mare he rode in foam, and himself out of breath. Dashing up to the Commander-in-Chief he exclaimed:

" General, you must move instantly, or be surrounded. The British are very near. I came upon them unawares, and saw them. Howe's army has crossed the forks, and are now coming down on this side of the river. They saw me, fired upon me, and came after me. Only the fleetness of Bessie, my mare, saved me from capture."

Washington heard him calmly.

"From information that I have just received, sir," he said, "that cannot be true."

"You are mistaken, General," replied Cheyney vehemently. "My life for it, you are mistaken. See here!" making a draft of the road in the sand. "Here is where I came upon them. Here is where they are, marching down upon this side. General, put me under arms until you find my story true, but save yourself."

"I believe you, sir," answered Washington rising quickly. "Would that my scouts had been as alert. Ah, here is an express now."

It was in truth another despatch from Sullivan which corroborated Thomas Cheyney's story. Colonel Bland, whom Washington had sent to reconnoitre above the forks, had seen the enemy in the rear of Sullivan's right, marching down at a rapid rate.

In fact, the old stratagem had been played secretly and successfully over again. While Knyphausen had engaged the attention of the American centre with a small force, the main body of the British, under Cornwallis, led by experienced guides, had made a circuitous march of seventeen miles, crossed the two fords of the upper branches of the Brandywine, and arrived in the rear of Birmingham Meeting-house, two miles to the right of Sullivan, before that general was certain that the enemy had left Kennet Square.

Washington at once sent orders to Sullivan to oppose Cornwallis with the whole right wing, each brigade attacking as soon as it arrived upon the ground. Wayne, in the meantime, was to keep Knyphausen at bay at the ford, in which service Maxwell was to coöperate.

Upon receiving Washington's orders Sullivan took new

ground, advancing further up the Brandywine, and formed in line of battle upon the gentle slopes near the Birmingham Meeting-house. It was an advantageous position, for both flanks were covered by thick woods. The artillery was judiciously posted, and the disposition of the whole was well made. Unfortunately Sullivan's division in taking its ground made too large a circuit, and was not fully formed for action when the well-formed battalions of the enemy came sweeping on and commenced a furious attack.

The action soon became general. The artillery of both armies opened with terrible effect; and while the Americans maintained their position the carnage was great. The most indomitable courage was displayed, and for a while the result was doubtful. The Americans, many of them unskillful militia, repelled charge after charge of the well-disciplined infantry, chasseurs, grenadiers, and guards of the enemy, until overwhelming numbers obliged them to yield. The right and left wings broke, and were driven into the woods. The centre stood firm for a while, but being exposed to the whole fire of the enemy, gave way at length also. To this division the Marquis de Lafayette had attached himself, and at this time he was wounded. He had thrown himself from his horse, and was endeavoring to rally the troops, when he was shot through the leg with a musket ball. Every effort to rally the troops was for a time vain. They fled to the woods in the rear pursued by the victorious enemy. Some of them rallied on a height to the north of Dilworth, and made a still more spirited resistance than at first, but the conflict was short, and the Americans again fled.

As soon as the firing began on the right wing, Washington ordered Greene's division to advance to the support of Sulli-

van. So rapidly did Greene press forward to the relief that he made the march of five miles in less than fifty minutes, but before his arrival the rout was complete. Between Dilworth and the Meeting-house he met the flying Americans, closely pursued by the British. Greene, by a skillful movement, opened his ranks, and received the fugitives, then closing them again he covered their retreat, and checked the pursuers by a continual fire of artillery. At a narrow defile, about a mile from the Meeting-house, in the direction of Chester, flanked on each side by woods, he changed his front, faced the enemy, and kept them at bay while the retreating party rested and formed in his rear. The brigades behaved with great bravery, and Greene gradually drew off the whole division in the face of the enemy, who, checked by the vigorous resistance, and seeing the day far spent, gave up all further pursuit.

The brave stand made by the brigades under Greene had, likewise, been a great protection to Wayne. He had for a long time withstood the attack of the enemy at Chadd's Ford, until the approach on the right by some of the enemy's troops who had been entangled in the woods, showed him that the right wing had been routed. He now gave up the defence of this post, and retreated by the Chester road. Knyphausen's troops were too fatigued to pursue him, and the others had been kept back by Greene's division. The approach of night ended the whole conflict. Washington gathered the parts of his army together as best he could, and retreated to Chester that night. The next day he marched toward Philadelphia, and encamped near Germantown.[1]

He was not dismayed by the disaster at the Brandywine.

[1] The account of this battle is founded on those of Sparks, Marshall, and Washington Irving in their Lives of Washington.

Strange to say, neither were the Congress nor the soldiers. A defeat was less depressing than to permit the British to march into the city without opposition. Washington resolved to meet Howe again as soon as his troops had a little rest.

Having allowed his army a day for rest and refreshment, Washington recrossed the Schuylkill, and proceeded on the Lancaster road, with the intention of risking another engagement. On the 16th of September, the two armies came in sight of each other near the Warren Tavern, on the Lancaster road, twenty-three miles from Philadelphia. They advanced, and were beginning to skirmish, when all at once there came a heavy downpour of rain. So violent was the storm, which lasted for twenty-four hours, that all thought of battle had to be abandoned. The Americans were particularly distressed because the rain penetrated their cartridge-boxes, and the ill-fitting locks of their muskets, so that they were useless, as they were lacking in bayonets. The army being thus rendered unfit for action, a retreat became necessary. All through the day, and a great part of the night, they marched through a cold and most distressing rain, and very deep roads. A few hours before day the troops halted at the Yellow Springs, where they found that scarcely a musket in a regiment could be discharged, and scarcely one cartridge in a box was fit for use. Washington therefore passed on to Warwick, on French Creek; a weary march in stormy weather for troops destitute of every comfort, and nearly a thousand of them actually barefooted. At Warwick furnace, ammunition and a few muskets were obtained to aid in disputing the passage of the Schuylkill, and make yet another effort to save Philadelphia.

From French Creek Wayne was detached with his division, with orders to join General Smallwood with the Maryland

militia, and, carefully concealing himself and his movements, to annoy the enemy's rear, and to cut off his baggage train. Wayne went forward with alacrity, encamped in a secluded spot two or three miles southwest of the British lines, away from the public roads, where he believed himself secure. The vigilance of the British sentinels did not discover him, but the treachery of Tories revealed his numbers and place of encampment to Howe. On the night of the twentieth he was surprised by Colonel Grey, and one hundred and fifty of his men were killed in the onslaught, some of whom were cruelly butchered after ceasing to resist, and while begging for quarter. But for the coolness of Wayne, his whole command must have been killed or taken prisoners.

Howe followed up this surprise of Wayne by marching along the valley road to the Schuylkill up to French Creek, along the front of Washington's army. To secure his right from being turned, and to guard the military stores deposited at Reading, Washington moved above him, on the opposite side of the river, to Pott's Grove. Howe now suddenly faced about, and by a rapid march on the night of the twenty-second reached the ford below, threw his troops across it the next morning, dispersed the American force left to guard the ford, and pushed forward for Philadelphia.

If Philadelphia were to be saved from the British, another battle would have to be risked, and Washington's harassed, barefooted troops, worn out by constant marchings, could not engage in another action without reinforcements. So, although the Congress and public feeling demanded a battle, Washington and his officers decided to give repose to the men, and await the arrival of reinforcements.

Howe pushed on to Germantown, six miles from Philadel-

phia, and encamped the main body of the army in and about that village, detaching Lord Cornwallis with a large force and a number of officers of distinction to take possession of the city. This was done with great parade and flaunting of feathers, a striking contrast to the " poor patriot troops, who had recently passed through those same streets, weary and worn, and happy if they could cover their raggedness with a brown linen hunting frock, and decorate their caps with a sprig of evergreen."

But if Howe had taken Philadelphia his troubles were not over. He must clear the Delaware of the obstructions placed in it by the Americans, and reduce the fortifications on its banks before his position in the city would be secure. Howe had already planned with his brother, Admiral Howe, to reduce the forts, and to clear away the obstructions. Washington, meantime, exerted himself to throw strong garrisons into the forts, and to keep up the obstructions. If he could stop General Howe's supplies by water, it might easily be done by land, and the acquisition of Philadelphia prove evil instead of good fortune to Sir William. It was his purpose, therefore, to render it inaccessible to the British fleet.

As Wayne's and General Smallwood's divisions, and other troops from New Jersey had joined him, Washington was now on the watch for some opportunity to strike a blow of consequence. He found his chance from two intercepted letters which informed him of a plan that Howe had formed to take a large detachment from Germantown to attack the fortifications at Billingsport. Immediately Washington formed a plan of surprising the British camp at Germantown, and attacking both wings, in front and rear, at the same time.

He was now in a position on the Skippack road, about sixteen miles from Germantown, a village stretching on both sides

of the great road leading northward from Philadelphia, which forms one continuous street nearly two miles in length. The British encampment crossed this village at right angles near the centre, and Cornwallis with four regiments of Grenadiers occupied Philadelphia.

At a council of officers called by Washington it was arranged that the divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's brigade, were to march down the main road, and, entering the town by way of Chestnut Hill, to attack the left wing; while General Armstrong with the Pennsylvania militia was to move down the Manatawny, or Ridge road, and turning the left flank to attack in the rear.

The divisions of Green and Stephens, flanked by McDougall's brigade, were to make a circuit by the Lime Kiln road, and, entering the town at the market house, were to attack the right wing. The Maryland and the Jersey militia, under Generals Smallwood and Forman, were to march by the old York road and fall upon the rear of their right. Lord Stirling, with the brigades of Maxwell and Nash, was to form a reserve corps.

After dark, on the evening of the 3rd of October, Washington with his army moved silently from his camp on Metuchen Hill, upon Skippack Creek, toward Germantown. He accompanied the column of Sullivan and Wayne in person. The attack had been planned to take place at daylight, but there were sixteen miles of weary march to make over rough roads, so that it was after daybreak when the troops emerged from the woods on Chestnut Hill. The morning was dark with a heavy fog. The outpicket of the enemy was attacked and routed, but not before the alarm was given; and the distant roll of a drum with the call to arms resounded through the murky

air. The picket guard, after discharging their two six pounders, were routed, and retreated down the south side of Mount Airy to a battalion of light-infantry who were forming in line of battle. Wayne led the attack on the infantry and soon forced them to give way, leaving their baggage behind them. Sullivan's division and Conway's brigade formed on the west of the road, and joined in the attack. The fog, together with the smoke of cannon and musketry, made it almost as dark as night; and the Americans mistaking one another for the enemy, frequently exchanged shots before they discovered their error. The whole of the enemy's advance were driven from their camping ground, leaving their tents standing, with all of their baggage. Colonel Musgrave, with six companies of the Fortieth Regiment, though closely pursued, threw himself into a house belonging to Mr. Chew, which stood directly in the way of Wayne's division, and poured on the Americans an incessant and galling fire of musketry from its doors and windows. Some of the officers were for pushing on, but General Knox objected.

"It is against all military rule to leave an enemy in a fort in the rear," said he.

Unluckily his objection prevailed, and the house became the object of attack. The cannonade, however, had little effect, as the artillery was too light to damage the building. Half an hour was thus spent in vain. At length a regiment was left to keep guard upon the mansion and hold its garrison in check, while the troops who had been thus detained by Colonel Musgrave again pressed forward.

This half hour's delay, however, of nearly one-half the army, disconcerted the action. The divisions and brigades thus separated from each other by the skirmishing attack upon

Chew's House, could not be reunited. The fog and the smoke rendered all objects indistinct at thirty yards' distance; the different parts of the army knew nothing of the position or movements of each other, and the Commander-in-Chief could take no view nor gain any information of the situation of the whole. Still, the action, though disconnected, irregular, and partial, was animated in various quarters. Sullivan, being reinforced by Nash's North Carolina troops and Conway's brigade, pushed on a mile beyond Chew's House where the left wing of the enemy gave way before him.

Greene and Stephen, with their divisions, having had to make a circuit, were late in coming into action, and became separated from each other, part of Stephen's division being arrested by a heavy fire from Chew's House, and pausing to return it. Greene, however, with his division pressed rapidly forward, encountered and broke a part of the British right wing, entered the village, and made a considerable number of prisoners.

Thus far prospects were flattering. The whole British army, astonished at the valor and ignorant of the number of the assailants, were on the point of retreating, and had selected Chester, near the Brandywine, as the place of rendezvous, when at this golden moment a singular panic seized the American army.

Sullivan's troops had just expended all their cartridges, and were alarmed by seeing the enemy gathering on their left. At the same time a light horseman cried that the enemy were surrounding them. Wayne's division, which had pushed the British nearly three miles, was alarmed by the appearance of a large body of American troops on its left flank, which it mistook for foes, and fell back in defiance of every effort of its officers to rally it. In its retreat it came upon Stephen's division and threw it into a panic, being in its turn mistaken for the

enemy; for the fog was so dense that it enveloped everything. The greatest confusion prevailed, and the confidence felt in the beginning of the action was lost. Mortified and chagrined Washington relinquished his hopes of victory, and turned his attention to the security of the army.

The enemy had now recovered from the effects of their surprise, and advanced in their turn. General Grey brought up the left wing, and all pressed upon the American troops as they receded. Lord Cornwallis, with a squadron of light horse from Philadelphia, arrived just in time to join the pursuit.[1]

The Americans succeeded in carrying off all their cannon and wounded, and retired to their camp on Skippack Creek. A few days later Washington removed his whole army to the range of hills about three-fourths of a mile northeast of the village of White Marsh, where he took a strong position. It was within fourteen miles of the city, and he could scour the roads above the city, and between the Schuylkill and Chester, to intercept all supplies going to the enemy.

Howe, in his turn, called in all outposts and concentrated his whole army near to and within Philadelphia, and prepared to make a general sweep of all the American works on the Delaware. It was quite as important to the Americans to maintain the forts, and defend the river obstructions as it was to the British to destroy them. Washington determined to hold them to the last extremity, for, cut off from supplies by land and water, Howe would be forced to evacuate the city.

The defences had been materially impaired. The works at Billingsport had been attacked and destroyed, and some of the enemy's ships had forced their way through the chevaux-de-frise placed there. The American frigate *Delaware,* stationed

[1] Sparks, Marshall, Washington Irving, Gordon.

in the river between the upper forts and Philadelphia, had run aground before a British battery, and been captured. But Fort Mercer, at Red Bank, on the Jersey side, and Fort Mifflin, on Mud Island, remained; and the galleys and floating batteries, of which the American fleet chiefly consisted, maintained a constant watch over the river.

On the 22nd of October Howe sent a detachment, under Count Donop, to attack Fort Mercer, while Fort Mifflin was to be attacked at the same time from the water. Both these attacks were so gallantly repulsed by the garrisons, with such telling effect upon the enemy, that for a time all operations were ceased against them. This made Washington hope that, by strengthening the forts, they might be held, and the position of the British in Philadelphia be rendered untenable.

About this time vague rumors began to steal into the camp at White Marsh. Rumors that filled the Americans with joy, and the British with alarm: for it was reported that General Gates had defeated General Burgoyne. For some days Washington was in a state of anxious expectancy, and then a letter from General Putnam, enclosing a copy of the terms of surrender, assured him of the truth of the rumor. Burgoyne had surrendered his whole army at Saratoga on the 17th of October to General Gates.

A wave of joy swept over the country at the news of the magnificent victory. As Trenton and Princeton had saved the Revolution, so now, the Convention of Saratoga established it. It was far reaching in its effects in Europe. It created a profound sensation in England; while France prepared to acknowledge the independence of the United States because of it. Washington was too true a patriot not to rejoice in the victory which meant so much to the Cause he loved. If that

Cause were advanced it was indifferent to him who wore the laurels, or in what quarter it happened. But he did want the troops he had let Gates have. He needed them, and so waited their return in wondering surprise that they were not sent.

But Gates, "in the excitement of his vanity," appeared to have forgotten that there was a Commander-in-Chief to whom he was accountable, and not only did not notify Washington of the surrender, but kept the troops in order to carry out some designs that he had in view.

Washington determined to send a member of his staff to Gates, as the latter paid no attention to written messages, to represent the critical state of affairs, and that a large reinforcement was absolutely necessary to hold the forts on the Delaware. This was now the chief object of the Americans, for by it Howe might be reduced to the same situation as Burgoyne if he could be kept from opening up the Delaware to his shipping.

Alexander Hamilton was chosen for this mission. He bore also a letter from Washington to Gates, congratulating the latter upon the signal victory he had achieved, but regretting that a matter of such magnitude should have reached him by report only. It was a dignified but stinging rebuke, but it was received by a man too much inflated by his own consequence to feel it.

There were many delays thrown in Hamilton's way of getting the troops, and their non-arrival continued to embarrass Washington's operations. The enemy were making preparations for further attempts upon the forts. Province Island, which lay on the west side of the Delaware within five hundred yards of Fort Mifflin, was being fortified with redoubts and batteries which were mounted with heavy cannon. Had the

reinforcements from the North come Washington might have detached a sufficient force to drive the enemy from Province Island; but at present it would take almost the whole army for the purpose. This would leave the public stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allentown, uncovered, as well as several of the hospitals. It would also leave Fort Mercer at Red Bank unsupported, through which Fort Mifflin was reinforced and supplied. There was nothing for it but to await the coming of the troops from the North. In the meantime, the garrisons at the forts were increased, and General Varnum with his brigade was stationed at Red Bank to render reinforcement to either fort as occasion might require.

On the 10th of November General Howe began an attack upon Fort Mifflin, and for four days the heroic garrison defended the fortress nobly. Then, as the fort was literally shot to pieces and to hold it was no longer possible, the troops crossed over to Red Bank. A few days later Howe followed up this success by an expedition against Fort Mercer.

At once General Huntingdon with a brigade joined Varnum at Red Bank. Washington also detached General Greene with his division, and sent an express to General Glover, who was on his way through the Jerseys to join the main army, to go to Red Bank also. These troops, with such militia as could be collected, it was hoped would be sufficient to save Mercer. Before a junction of the forces could be formed, however, Cornwallis appeared before the fort with such a force that a defence was hopeless, and the works were abandoned. Cornwallis immediately took possession of them, and totally destroyed them. A few days later the troops from the North for whom Washington had waited so long and so anxiously, marched into camp. Had they arrived but ten days sooner the forts might have been

saved. As it was the Delaware was now open to the King's ships.

And now Howe thought to wind up the year's campaign by attacking Washington, and "driving him beyond the mountains." So boasting he marched out of Philadelphia with flying colors, and approaching White Marsh, reconnoitred Washington's position with a view to a general action. For three days he manœuvred to draw the American commander from his strong situation, for it was too strong to risk attacking; but Washington was not to be decoyed. He would welcome an attack, but was in no condition to be the attacker. Howe was wary. The American had manifested too much spirit in the recent combats to be otherwise. Finally he retreated silently and precipitately in the night to Philadelphia.

It was now December, and the weather was very severe. The troops, worn down by long and hard service, had need of rest; and being neither well clothed, nor sufficiently supplied with blankets, could no longer keep the field in tents. After much consideration, it was decided to hut the army at Valley Forge, in Chester County, on the west side of the Schuylkill about twenty miles from Philadelphia. And on the eleventh day of December the army took up its sad and dreary march for that place.

CHAPTER XXIII

A Time That Tried Men's Souls

SAD and dreary indeed was the march through the midst of a deep snow to Valley Forge. There were actually hundreds of the soldiers who made it with bare feet, and their passage could have been traced by their blood-stained foot-prints in the snow. And yet—Oh, the pity of it!—at this very time "hogheads of shoes, stockings, and clothing, were lying at different places on the roads and in the woods, perishing for want of teams, or of money to pay the teamsters." [1]

Valley Forge lay upon the west side of the Schuylkill River, and was admirably adapted for a camp, being well watered and well wooded. It was near enough to the British army for Washington to watch its movements, keep its foraging parties in check, and protect the country from the depredations of the enemy.

The army reached the valley on the seventeenth of December, and observed the next day as a day of thanksgiving and praise, according to the recommendation from Congress. On the following morning, they spread over the hills, and set to work to build huts. Some cut down trees, others fashioned them, and still others began the work of raising. Soon a city

[1] Gordon, "American Revolution."

of cabins, laid out in streets, stretched from Valley Creek to the Schuylkill River. The walls of the huts were of logs filled in with clay used like mortar; the fireplaces were also of logs plastered over; and logs split into rude planks or slabs furnished the roofing. The men found them comfortable enough as dwellings, for there was plenty of fuel to heat them; the only thing of which there was plenty.

And now all might have gone well if Congress and its Commissary had arranged for proper provisions, and a sufficient supply of blankets, clothing, and good clean straw. Congress, however, had done nothing of the sort; as the troops soon found.

A few days after entering the camp word was brought in that a large detachment of the British were on a foraging expedition near Darby, and General Washington immediately gave orders for putting the army in motion, when the alarming fact was disclosed that there were no more rations. The commissary stores were completely exhausted.

The Continentals were accustomed to privations, but a thing like this was not to be tolerated. Men can fight on small rations; they can do little without any. There was but one thing for Washington to do under the circumstances, and that was to exercise the authority recently conferred upon him by Congress, to forage the country round, seize supplies wherever found, and pay for them in money, or in certificates redeemable by Congress. He was reluctant to use these powers, not only because of the effect upon the people, but because such methods were prone to demoralize his men, and incite them to lawlessness. However, for the time he was compelled to resort to this means of saving his troops from complete desolation; but he wrote an earnest protest to Congress on the subject.

He had scarcely sent his letter when he received a remonstrance that the Legislature of Pennsylvania had addressed to Congress against his going into winter quarters instead of keeping the field. Washington compressed his lips into a stern line as he read the protest. Rising he walked to the one small window of the room, and gazed through it thoughtfully. The window faced east toward the slopes where a large portion of the army lay encamped, an army that had never been so reduced—never so helpless. At that very moment there were nearly four thousand men who could not leave their huts for lack of clothes. There were many who were sick. Many who had no blankets, and who had to sit up all night by the fire to keep from freezing, for there was not even straw to lie upon. Many, many, who were shoeless; their feet and legs frozen, sometimes until they grew black, so that it was necessary to amputate them. The suffering was prolonged, the hardships incredible.

It was a severe winter; the snow lay piled in heavy drifts upon the ground and the hillsides; the cold was intense. Yet men were remonstrating because these naked, cold, hungry men had not kept the field. He knew that the army was believed to be stronger than it really was. He was obliged to conceal his true condition from the public lest it should become known to the enemy, and work to the undoing of the army. It had been a difficult task to keep life and soul of his troops together, yet in spite of the remissness of Congress it had been done. The General turned suddenly, and sat down at his table, a steely light in his gray-blue eyes. He was usually very tender with Congress, knowing the difficulties under which they labored, but the limit of his forbearance was reached. Now he wrote a letter that set forth in no uncertain terms the condition

of the patriots in the valley; a letter that no man could read unmoved.

He told of military movements which had been made impossible for lack of provisions; of men unable to do duty as soldiers for lack of clothing and shoes; of no less than " twenty-eight hundred and eighty-eight men, now in camp unfit for duty because they are barefoot and otherwise naked; " of numbers of men sitting up all night by fires to keep from freezing, because of lack of blankets and straw. He reminded them that there had been no assistance from the Quartermaster-General since July, and that his famished army must dissolve unless supplies were forthcoming. He described the Legislature of Pennsylvania as protesting against his inactivity, " as though they thought the soldiers were stocks or stones, and equally insensible to frost or snow." He set forth the absurdity of expecting such an army, so crippled, being expected to cope with one of greatly superior numbers, perfectly supplied. " I can assure those gentlemen," he concluded, " that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets."

The manly, pathetic letter produced its effect, and supplies did come in time. But mismanagement of the Commissary Department was not all of Washington's troubles. It was by far the most trying winter of his life, made doubly so by a direct attempt to ruin his reputation. A sort of plot was formed for removing him from power, and putting Gates in his place. The victory at Saratoga had thrown a lustre around Gates's name, which for a time dimmed the brightness of Washington's devotion to his country. And yet the glory of Saratoga belonged to Schuyler, Arnold, and Stark. Schuyler had paved the way

for the surrender; Gates had but to reap the laurels. Stark had fought its forerunner at Bennington; Arnold had made victory certain by furious valor on the field of battle; yet Gates took the credit of everything to himself. There gathered about him a few men, aided by a faction in Congress, who worked secretly against the Commander-in-Chief. At the head of this faction, and its most ardent spirit, was General Conway.

Conway was an Irishman by birth, brought up in France and had received his military education in the French service. With many other foreigners he came to America in the spring of '77, to offer his services to Congress, expecting to be made a major-general at once. To his disappointment he was given the commission of only a brigadier-general. Hoping for promotion he joined the army under Washington at Morristown, where Washington at once gauged his character. He was boastful, intriguing, presumptuous, and selfish, looking only to his personal advantage. Therefore, when Congress would have given him a major-generalship over the heads of Americans who had been in the service since the outbreak of the war, Washington remonstrated with that body, setting forth the injustice to meritorious officers of promoting to the highest rank the youngest brigadier in the service. Conway did not forgive this, and from that time forward was the Chief's implacable enemy.

So powerful did the Cabal become for a time that a new Board of War was organized, with General Gates as its president. General Mifflin was a member, and Conway was promoted to be Inspector-General of the army, in spite of the fact that Congress knew what Washington thought of him. Certain powers, too, belonging properly to the Commander-in-Chief were transferred to the Board.

"But this is beyond endurance, Your Excellency," burst from Alexander Hamilton indignantly, when the news of Conway's appointment was brought to Valley Forge.

"Yes, my boy," answered Washington with a glance of affection at his young aide. "It is. Were I to consult my feelings as a man I would not continue in this command; but that is the very thing my enemies are trying to bring about. They take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost moment to conceal. In the advancement of the Cause we have to endure not only hardships and danger, but calumny and wrong; may God help us to do our duty. Unless Congress wishes it, I shall not resign so long as I think I can be of use to the country. Being embarked in this contest, by God's will, I will see it to an end. The army at least have full confidence in me."

Which was true. Men and officers who have together faced death, who have shared the enthusiasm of victory, or tasted the bitterness of defeat, are bound by no slight bonds. The soldiers loved and revered their general. There never was any doubt in their minds but that he was the man for Commander-in-Chief, and over their camp-fires they laughed at the idea of Gates taking his place; and this was true also of the troops who had served under the latter. Washington might have "jealous rivals in the army, bitter enemies in the Congress, but the soldiers loved him, and the large heart of the nation always beat true to him."

The British rejoiced at the dissensions among the Americans, and waited eagerly for the deposing of George Washington. With him out of the way they knew it would be an easy matter

to quell the Revolution. Since Trenton and Princeton the enemy were well aware whose indomitable soul remained steady through every vicissitude.

But George Washington was not deposed. Through the blabbing of the confidential secretary of the Cabal the conspiracy was exposed. There was much correspondence in which General Gates did not appear to good advantage. The Congress soon perceived the politics concerned in the affair, and the public would not hear to another commander-in-chief. So the matter died finally, leaving Washington's hold on affairs all the stronger for the attempt to weaken it. Gates was returned to the Northern army, with the understanding that all movements were under command of the Commander-in-Chief; Conway resigned, and much to his consternation, his resignation was accepted. Some time after he returned to France and was heard of no more. But the matter extended throughout the winter, and did not cease to annoy until its termination in the spring.

As the winter advanced the sufferings of the army increased. There was little less than a famine in the camp. Horses died for want of forage; the country in the vicinity of the camp was exhausted. Washington remonstrated and pleaded with Congress, and made every exertion in his power to remedy the evil. It seemed as though the army must dissolve; yet somehow the crisis was passed.

In February Mrs. Washington arrived in camp, and took up her residence at headquarters. Lady Stirling, Mrs. Knox, and the wives of other of the officers came also, bringing a gleam of brightness to the desolate encampment. At once the ladies began to do all they could to relieve the situation by supplying the much needed clothing and food. Every day they met with

Mrs. Washington at Mr. Potts's to assist her in knitting socks, patching garments, and making shirts for the poor soldiers, whenever material could be obtained.

At length things began to brighten. Congress, at the Chief's request, sent a committee to reside at the camp, to see for themselves the condition of the army. This resulted in many recommendations being made by them for the bettering of conditions. Supplies too came in; magazines were formed in the valley; the threatened famine was averted; " grim visaged war " gradually relaxed his features, and affairs took on a more cheering aspect.

February brought also the Baron Steuben to the camp in the valley. He was a seasoned soldier, having served in the seven years' war, and been aide-de-camp to the great Frederick himself. Honors had been heaped upon him in Germany, but he had laid them aside and come to offer his services to America at the persuasion of the French Cabinet. Being an experienced officer and a thorough disciplinarian his services were gladly accepted by Congress and Washington, and he was made Inspector-General of the army in place of Conway who had resigned.

The baron was a hard worker; up with the dawn and out at sunrise, drilling and reorganizing the soldiers with unbounded zeal. As he was a warm-hearted man, in spite of being a martinet for discipline, he soon became a favorite with the men. The result was an army capable of executing all essential movements. And so the winter drew to a close. " It had been an epic of slow suffering silently borne, of patient heroism, and of a very bright and triumphant outcome, when the gray days, the long nights, and the biting frosts fled together." [1]

[1] Lodge, " The Story of the American Revolution."

To Washington's great satisfaction Greene was appointed Quartermaster-General, still retaining his rank of Major-General in the army. Greene was reluctant to accept the office, but agreed to perform its duties for the space of a year without compensation. By extraordinary exertions he succeeded in establishing an order and system that would enable the army to move with rapidity the moment it should be required.

And while the American army was enduring hardships and untold sufferings at Valley Forge, the British settled themselves comfortably in Philadelphia, and gave themselves up to such amusements as the city afforded or they could create.

There were numerous encounters through the winter between small parties of American and British light horse. Allan McLane, Lighthorse Harry Lee, and Anthony Wayne were the terror of outlying pickets, and their daring exploits were particularly exasperating to the British.

Spring opened without any material change in the disposition of the armies, but it brought the glad tidings that France had joined in an alliance with the United States, and was sending men, money, and a fleet to help them fight for independence. First of all nations she recognized American Independence. Two treaties had been completed: one of amity and commerce, the other of defensive alliance, and their ratification was an occasion of much joy throughout the country. The 6th of May was set apart for a fête at the camp in the valley. There were religious services, solemn thanksgivings by the chaplains at the head of each brigade; after which a grand parade, a national discharge of thirteen guns, with cheers for the King of France, Lafayette, the friendly European Powers, and the American States. There was an uncommonly good dinner in every tent and hut, and every soldier was made to feel the encouraging

change in the aspect of affairs. And the army, after the severe winter, was in the mood to appreciate a holiday and a feast.

At the same time that the news of the French Alliance was celebrated with so much joy in the camp at Valley Forge, a festival of an entirely different nature was taking place in Philadelphia. The career of Sir William Howe was now drawing to a close. His conduct of the war had given great dissatisfaction in England, and he had been recalled even as General Gage had been. Sir Henry Clinton was to succeed him in the command. As he was a great favorite with the officers, a number of them combined to give him a farewell pageant. It was called the Michianza, or Medley, a kind of regatta and tournament; the former took place on the Delaware, the latter at the county seat of Mr. Joseph Wharton on its banks. Sir Henry Clinton arrived from New York during its performance, and a few days later assumed charge of the British army.

Early in June it was evident that a total evacuation of Philadelphia was on the point of taking place; and circumstances convinced Washington that the march of the main body would be through the Jerseys. Some of his officers thought differently, especially General Lee, whom Washington had at last succeeded in getting exchanged for General Prescott.

At a Council of War held by Washington to decide whether the Americans should attack the British on the march, Lee rose, and spoke eloquently against bringing on a general engagement with the enemy.

"They are far superior to us in discipline," said he pompously. "In fact, troops never have been better disciplined than those of the enemy. An attack would endanger the safety of the Cause which is now in a prosperous state, in consequence of

the French alliance just formed. We ought not to put everything to the risk just at the moment of making such an alliance. I would rather make a bridge of gold to help the enemy on their way than to attack them. Let us then merely follow them, observe their motions, and prevent them from committing excesses against the people of New Jersey."

Tall, hollow-cheeked and uncomely, he yet drew many officers to his way of thinking. Lafayette, Greene, Wayne, and Cadwalader thought differently. They could not bear the idea that the enemy should make a long march through the country unmolested. An opportunity might present itself to strike some signal blow, and they believed that the army should take advantage of such a situation; and in this belief lay Washington's heart. While debate on the matter was still going on word was brought into camp that the enemy had actually evacuated the city.

Washington immediately broke camp, and pushed forward in pursuit of the enemy. General Arnold, being not yet sufficiently recovered from a wound received at Saratoga for field service, was sent with a force to take command of Philadelphia. General Maxwell was detached to advance quickly to help General Dickinson and the New Jersey militia in harassing the enemy on their march.

Heavy rains and sultry summer heat retarded Washington's march, but the army crossed the Delaware at Coryell's Ferry on the 24th of June. The British were now at Mount Holly whence they could take a road to the left to Brunswick, and so on to Staten Island and New York; or they might turn to the right and go through Monmouth, by the Heights of Middletown to Sandy Hook. Uncertain which road they might choose Washington detached Colonel Morgan with six hundred

picked men to reinforce Maxwell, and hang on their rear; while he himself pushed on with the main body toward Princeton, cautiously keeping on the mountainous country to the left of the most northern road.

The British moved very slowly. Encumbered by baggage and provisions the train of wheel carriages and horses was twelve miles long. Washington did not know but that Sir Henry was proceeding thus slowly to draw him down into the level country, and then, outflanking him, gain the strong ground above him, and bring on a general action on disadvantageous terms. He was not at all averse to an engagement whenever it could be made on favorable ground; he halted, therefore, at Hopewell, and held another Council of War. As before Lee was opposed to any action whatever, urging that the best thing to do was to keep at a distance from the enemy, and annoy them by detachments. But Greene, Wayne, and Lafayette still clung to the opinion that the rear of the enemy should be attacked by a strong detachment, while the main body should be so disposed to give general battle should circumstances render it advisable. As this was Washington's own opinion he determined to act upon it.

In the meantime Sir Henry Clinton had changed his route, and turned to the right by a road leading through Freehold to Navesink and Sandy Hook; to embark at the latter place. No longer in doubt as to his line of march Washington detached Wayne with a thousand men to join the advance corps, which was now upwards of four thousand strong. The command of this division properly belonged to General Lee, as second in command; but as he was strenuously opposed to an attack of any kind Lafayette asked for it. Washington willingly gave

his consent to this arrangement, provided Lee were satisfied. Lee declared himself to be pleased to yield the command to Lafayette, observing to the Marquis that he was glad to be freed from all responsibility in plans which he was sure would fail.

With delight Lafayette set out on the 25th to join General Scott's forces, while Washington, leaving his baggage at Kingston, moved with the main body to Cranberry, three miles in the rear of the advance corps, to be ready to support it in case of action.

And now Lee suddenly changed his mind. There seemed a promise of success in the movement, and going to Washington he asserted his claim as senior officer to command the advance. He declared that he would be eternally disgraced should the Marquis command such a force, which properly belonged to him. A movement of the enemy at this time made it possible to arrange the matter to Lee's satisfaction. Sir Henry, finding himself harassed by light troops on the flanks, and in danger of attack in the rear, placed all of his baggage in front under convoy of General Knyphausen, while he threw the flower of his troops under Cornwallis in the rear. This made it necessary for Washington to still further strengthen the advanced corps; so he sent Lee with two brigades to support the force under Lafayette. As Lee was senior major-general this gave him command of the whole. But Washington expressly stipulated that he should not interfere with any plans that Lafayette had set afoot in the preliminaries. At the same time he wrote to Lafayette explaining the matter, and the young Marquis chivalrously resigned the command to Lee without a protest. On the evening of the 27th the enemy encamped on high ground near Monmouth Court House. Lee

with the advance encamped at Englishtown, about five miles distant. The main body was three miles in the rear.

In the evening Washington reconnoitred the enemy's position. It was very strong, being protected by woods and morasses. Should an attack be made upon it there was small prospect of success. But the Heights of Middletown, ten miles further on, were even stronger, and if the enemy gained them unmolested there would be no opportunity of attacking them at all. Washington resolved that an attack should be made on their rear early in the morning, as soon as their front should be in motion. With this in view he gave orders to General Lee, in the presence of his officers, to make such dispositions as would be necessary for the attack, keeping his troops lying on their arms, ready for action on the shortest notice. He intended to observe the same disposition with his own troops. There was reason for this preparedness.

But after Washington had returned to the main body he became apprehensive lest Sir Henry should move in the night; so he sent orders to Lee before midnight to detach six or seven hundred men to watch the movements of the enemy, and hold them in check until the rest of the forces could come up. General Dickinson was charged with this duty by Lee. Morgan was likewise stationed with his men to be ready for skirmishing.

The day broke. Even at dawn the sun was scorching; the heat intense. Very early in the morning Washington received an express from General Dickinson informing him that the enemy were in motion. Instantly he sent orders to Lee to push forward and attack them, unless there should be powerful reasons to the contrary; adding, that he was coming on to support him. For that purpose he immediately set forward with his

own troops, ordering them to throw by their knapsacks and blankets, because of the heat.

Presently word came from Lee that the van of the enemy under Knyphausen had descended into the plain between Monmouth Court House and Middletown. Sir Henry remained in camp with his choice troops to give the long train of wagons and pack-horses time to get well on the way. Lee reported that he was ready to attack General Clinton as soon as the latter came down from the heights.

A little later another express informed the Chief that Lee had detached Wayne with seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery to skirmish in the rear of a covering party and hold it in check; while he, Lee, with the rest of his force would get in front of it, and cut it off from the main body. He was certain of success. The plan was too carefully arranged to fail.

The booming of cannon soon notified Washington that the action which he had desired had begun, and caused him to quicken his march. At Freehold Church, where the road forked, he detached Greene with part of his forces to the fight, to flank the enemy in the rear of Monmouth Court House, while he with the rest of the column would press forward by the other road.

While Washington was giving these directions, his attention was attracted to a horseman who was approaching at great speed. As he came from the direction of Lee's forces the Chief believed him to be an express, and spurred forward to meet him. It proved to be a countryman.

"General," he cried as he dashed and drew rein, "the Continentals are retreating."

"Do not speak so, sir," exclaimed Washington provoked at

what he considered a false alarm. "It might work harm to the troops."

"But look, sir," cried the man pointing to a fifer who at that moment came running up in breathless affright.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Washington; but the fifer could not answer, so fear stricken was he. "Take him into custody," ordered the Chief sternly, "lest he recover enough to pipe some panic-breeding tune."

With this he spurred forward. He met other fugitives. They filled the roads, the paths; they came from the woods, some sobbing, some dizzy with the heat; all in dire confusion. Their shamefaced officers could only say that they had been ordered back; they did not know why. Amazed, incredulous, Washington spurred on past the Freehold Meeting-house. Between that edifice and the morass beyond it he met Grayson's and Patton's regiments in most disorderly retreat, jaded with heat and fatigue.

"Is the whole advance corps retreating, sir?" demanded Washington of the officer in charge.

"I believe they are, General," came the amazing reply.

Washington could not believe it. There had been scarcely any firing, and he had received no notice of a retreat from Lee. What could it mean? The heads of several columns began to appear, and he was forced to believe what was becoming too evident—the whole advance was falling back on the main body without notice; a movement that might cause the rout of the entire army. One of the first officers who came up was Colonel Shreve at the head of his regiment.

"What is the meaning of this, Colonel?" asked Washington, his surprise and alarm increasing.

"General, I don't know," exclaimed the officer. "I am re-

treating by order. The men don't know; and it has made them all panic-stricken. It will be difficult to stop them now."

"Has there been any fightning?"

"Only a slight skirmish with the enemy's cavalry, and we repulsed them, sir. The retreat is by General Lee's command." The colonel smiled significantly.

"I never saw the like, General," exclaimed Major Howland who was near by. "We are fleeing from a shadow."

Over Washington's mind there darted a suspicion that perhaps Lee was trying to mar the plan of action adopted contrary to his counsels. But he merely said:

"March your men across the morass to the hill yonder, Colonel. Halt there, rest and refresh them." With this he galloped forward, his indignation kindling as he went.

Arriving on rising ground, he beheld Lee approaching with the rest of his command in full retreat. By this time he was fearfully aroused, and he spurred toward Lee at full speed. A cheer arose from the troops as they saw him coming, and involuntarily they came to a halt.

"I desire to know, sir, what is the reason, and whence arises this disorder and confusion?" he cried, drawing rein before Lee.

"Sir, sir," stammered Lee.

"I desire to know the meaning of this disorder and confusion," repeated the Chief; and his aspect was terrible to see.

"You know that the attack was contrary to my advice and opinion," stuttered Lee.

"Then you should not have insisted upon the command, sir. You are a poltroon!"

The faces of the officers during this brief colloquy had cleared as if by magic. Washington had said just what every one of them wanted said. Wayne had held victory in his grasp when he had been ordered to retreat. Lafayette had asked that he might halt and fight.

"Sir," Lee had replied, "you do not know British soldiers. We cannot stand against them; we shall certainly be driven back at first, and we must be cautious."

"It may be so, General," Lafayette had answered; "but British soldiers have been beaten, and they may be again; at any rate I am disposed to make the trial."

Lee had complied with the request, but soon called the marquis back. The retreat had filled the hearts of the officers with anger; it was so mysterious. But Washington indulged in no more parley. The enemy were within a quarter of an hour's march. The fortunes of the day were to be retrieved, if possible, by instant arrangements. These the Chief proceeded to make with great celerity.

"Never," said Lafayette afterward, "did General Washington appear to better advantage."

The place where the troops had halted was admirably adapted for a stand, being rising ground to which the enemy could approach only over a narrow causeway. The rallied troops were formed on this eminence, and soon order appeared in the midst of the confusion. Stewart and Ramsay, with two batteries, were formed under cover of a wood, and coöperated with Oswald to keep the enemy at bay. The promptness with which everything was done showed the effects of Baron Steuben's discipline. An army to be reckoned with had emerged from the bleak hills of Valley Forge.

Then, having made all his arrangements, Washington rode

back to where Lee was standing. He was in a calmer mood now.

"Will you retain command on this height or not?" he asked. "If you will, I will return to the main body, and have it formed on the next height."

"It is equal to me where I command," replied Lee.

"I expect you will take proper means for checking the enemy," rejoined Washington.

"Your orders shall be obeyed; and I shall not be the first to leave the ground," said Lee. Washington then rode back to arrange the rear division of the army.

The battle soon broke out. Cornwallis hoped to repeat the victory of the morning which might mean the complete rout of Washington's army. The drums rolled the charge. As they came on, in their gorgeous uniforms and with their glittering bayonets, they seemed about to accomplish all that their leaders desired of them. But the Americans met them with a warm cannonade, which brought them to a stand. Lee could fight, if he had a mind to, so now he maintained the advanced position with great spirit. At length, however, he was obliged to retire, and he brought off his troops in good order across the morass. As he had promised he was the last to leave the ground. Having formed his men in a line beyond the morass, he rode up to Washington, saying:

"Sir, here are my troops. How is it your pleasure that I should dispose of them?"

"Take them to the rear of Englishtown," ordered Washington, who saw that the poor fellows were worn to exhaustion with the intolerable heat and hard fighting. "Assemble all fugitives there that you meet with, and give the men a rest. They need it."

The check given by Lee had afforded time for Washington to draw up the left wing and second line of his army on an eminence covered by a morass in front. The left wing was commanded by Lord Stirling, who had with him a detachment of artillery and several field-pieces. General Greene was in charge of the right wing.

Lord Stirling opened fire with the batteries upon the advancing enemy; who, finding themselves warmly opposed in front, attempted to turn the left flank of the Americans, but were repulsed. They then attempted the right with as little success. Greene had advanced a body of troops with artillery to a commanding piece of ground in his front, which not only disappointed the design of turning the right, but enfiladed the party which yet remained in front of the left wing. General Wayne was now advanced with a body of infantry to engage them in front. At this point was a ravine. Near by was a farm; and into the outbuildings and orchard Wayne threw his troops. Greene and Stirling with their batteries enfiladed his front. From this vantage point he opened a severe and well directed fire upon the enemy's centre. Repeated attempts were made to dislodge him, but in vain. Colonel Monckton of the Royal Grenadiers now undertook to drive him from his post at the point of the bayonet. In forming his Grenadiers Monckton made them a fiery talk. His voice sounded over the field, and Wayne's men heard the appeal and knew what it meant. The drums rolled the charge, and the Grenadiers charged as though they were on parade, Colonel Monckton with waving sword leading them on. At this moment a volley belched from the guns, striking down not one man merely but great numbers of them. Among them was their brave leader, Monckton. Again and again the Grenadiers returned to the

charge; again and again they were repulsed with great slaughter.

It was a long battle. The hot afternoon wore its weary length away, and still the fight went on. Cannon roar was continuous. The heat was excessive. Several of Clinton's soldiers became mad from its intensity. "Three officers and fifty-six men fell dead as they advanced without a wound."

At length the British gave way, and fell back to the ground which Lee had occupied in the morning. Here their flanks were secured by woods and morasses, and their front could only be approached across a narrow causeway.

It was a very strong position, and, although it was now almost sunset, Washington resolved to continue the engagement. For this purpose he ordered General Poor, with his own and the Carolina brigade to move to their right; General Woodford to gain their left, and the artillery to gall them in front. There were so many impediments, owing to the broken character of the ground, that before they could be overcome it was nearly dark. The soldiers were very much fatigued by the extreme heat of the weather, and the long hard battle, and many of them sank upon the ground in utter exhaustion; all needed rest. They were ordered, therefore, to lie on their arms on the ground which they occupied so as to be ready to make the attack by daybreak. Washington lay on his cloak at the foot of a tree, with Lafayette beside him, talking over the strange conduct of Lee; whose disorderly retreat had come so near being fatal to the army.

At daybreak the drums beat the reveillé. The troops roused themselves for action only to meet with disappointment. At midnight, under cover of the darkness, Sir Henry Clinton had put his weary army in motion, and had marched away so silently

that he did not awaken the patriots sleeping near by. Washington, considering the distance they had gained, for by this time they had reached the high grounds of Middletown, the fatigue of his men, the great heat, and the deep sandy country, with but little water, deemed pursuit fruitless; so Sir Henry passed on to Sandy Hook, where he embarked for New York.

After giving his troops a few days repose Washington marched on to Brunswick where he encamped for a short time; and thence to the Hudson which he crossed at King's Ferry, and encamped near White Plains; for the safety of the Hudson River was now the object of his solicitude.

And in the meantime, Lee began to write abusive letters to the Commander-in-Chief. In view of his good behavior after the retreat, and the fact that he really seemed to have been surprised by the enemy, the matter would have been dropped had his haughty spirit been content to let it rest; instead he demanded a court martial which was granted to him. The court martial suspended him from the army for a year. Congress confirmed the sentence, and later dismissed him from the service.

Early in July the French fleet, under the Comte D'Estaing, entered the Capes of the Delaware. As he was too late to find either the British fleet or the British army at Philadelphia a plan was concerted between him and Washington to attack New York City. The French fleet was superior to the British fleet in numbers, but when it reached New York Harbor it was found that its heaviest ships could not safely attempt to pass the bar at Sandy Hook. There were the French ships, and the British vessels within sight just across the bar, yet the sand-bar held them apart as truly as though they were miles distant from each other. Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Ham-

ilton and Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens brought messages and a pilot from Washington, but the soundings were such that the admiral was forced to give up trying to enter New York Harbor.

It was then arranged that the Comte D'Estaing should sail for Newport, Rhode Island, and with a land force of Americans attack the British garrison of six thousand men under Major-General Pigot. The British had held this post since December, 1776. Ten thousand Americans under Sullivan, Greene, and Lafayette, were to act in combination with the French fleet. Washington was very hopeful of the success of this movement, but the fleet and the army failed to act in concert. Lord Howe arrived with his fleet, strengthened by new arrivals, and destroyed the first part of the intended plan. Then a great tempest scattered the vessels of both fleets, and interfered with land operations. There followed misunderstandings between the American generals and the French admiral, and the latter sailed away to Boston Harbor to refit his weather-shattered ships. Some fighting followed among the land forces, but news of the approach of reinforcements to the British made the Americans give up the undertaking. The failure of the affair was a bitter disappointment to Washington, and to the entire country.

The two armies now settled down to watch each other. A continual skirmishing was kept up along the lines; and bitter hostility was caused by the British marauding expeditions along the seaboard. The entire New England coast was ravaged, shipping destroyed, wharves, storehouses, mills, and private dwellings burned. England was sparing of no means at her command to bring war's ruthlessness home to her children.

Early in the summer a terrible war with the Indians broke

out along the western frontier of the United States. The British post at Fort Niagara was the centre from which the British agents went among the red men, inciting them to deeds of violence by presents of use and luxury. Indians and Tories laid waste the beautiful valley of Wyoming, killing over four hundred men, besides women and children and scattered families unrecorded, and rendering five thousand people homeless. All Europe heard of the deed with horror.

Cherry Valley, in New York, was visited in like manner in November, and all the western frontier, from the Mohawk to the Ohio, was threatened with the scalping knife and tomahawk. This Indian warfare in the interior had to be met and checked as well as the enemy on the seaboard.

In November, too, Sir Henry Clinton despatched Colonel Campbell, with a body of troops, in the squadron of Commodore Hyde Parker, to proceed against Georgia; it was evident that the war was to be carried into the Southern States, on which the British believed that a considerable impression might be made. At the request of the Congressional delegates from Georgia and South Carolina General Lincoln, whose military reputation stood high, was appointed to take charge of the Southern Department of the army. Before he could reach Georgia, however, General Prevost, in command of the East Florida British forces, marched into Georgia, and compelled the surrender of Savannah.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Saddest Hour of a Dark Period

ABOUT the beginning of December, Washington prepared to put his army into the most advantageous winter quarters by distributing the troops in a line of strong cantonments extending from Long Island Sound to the Delaware. General McDougall commanded in the Highlands, General Putnam at Danbury, while the headquarters of the Chief were at Middlebrook, in New Jersey. It was a wise arrangement of the men, affording protection to the country, easy subsistence for the army, and securing the important posts of the Hudson.

The dreary winter was brightened by two events: "Mad Anthony" Wayne's capture of Stony Point, and the successful assault of the British Post at Paulus by Lighthorse Harry Lee. The terrific cold, the lack of supplies in the patriot army, and dissension in the Congress, left Washington at his wit's ends to hold his small army.

April brought a letter from Lafayette who had just returned from a trip to France, a letter so warm and friendly that it brought tears to Washington's eyes. The young marquis had used his influence to such an advantage that the French were

going to enter the contest on a much larger scale than before. The Count de Rochambeau, an officer of high standing, was ordered to America in command of nearly six thousand picked men. They were to be conveyed in a fleet under Admiral Ternay, and a second fleet was to follow them later.

The Chief was delighted with the prospect afforded by this news. He was called a Fabius, but Washington was a Fabius by necessity and not by nature. To dare is great; to endure is ofttimes greater. To keep heart when all have lost it, to stand alone under awful responsibilities and immense cares requires more fortitude than to do battle. George Washington was naturally warm tempered; a lesser man would have risked more, and lost all.

Soon Lafayette himself came to headquarters where he received a warm welcome, and where he disclosed more fully the plans of the allies. But the fleet had not yet come, and it was decided to wait until its arrival before venturing upon any activities. And too there was much to be done for the army. Spring found its condition so bad that there was serious trouble among some of the men. Washington suppressed it with difficulty. It gave him deeper concern than anything which yet had happened.

This trouble, together with the complaints of the Jersey people against the frequent demands upon them for supplies for the army, had been reported to General Knyphausen, commander of New York. He was led to believe that the American soldiers and the inhabitants of the Jerseys were ready to desert the cause, and join the royal standard as soon as ample protection should be given them. With this belief, on the 6th of June he passed from Staten Island to Elizabethtown, New Jersey, to fan the flame of discontent among the soldiers and

the people of the province. He soon found that the reports concerning the dissatisfaction of the Americans were greatly exaggerated, for on the first alarm the militia assembled, and aided by some small parties of regular troops, annoyed the British by an irregular but galling fire of musketry, wherever the nature of the ground afforded opportunity. In revenge the village of Connecticut Farms was burned, and the pastor's wife, Mrs. Caldwell, wantonly killed in the midst of her terrified family.

On learning of Knyphausen's entry into New Jersey Washington immediately sent a force to oppose him, following with the main body of the army; but when he reached Springfield there was no enemy. Knyphausen, learning that Washington was advancing to meet him, wheeled and returned to Elizabethtown. An American detachment followed, harassing him on his march, and attacking his rear guard the next morning. They were repulsed, and Knyphausen intrenched his forces in the old works thrown up at the town by the Americans, where he remained for some time. Washington, meantime, took up a strong position in the Short Hills, near Springfield, to watch the movements of the enemy. The troops at this time under his immediate command numbered only four thousand effective men, and he dared not hazard an engagement except on advantageous ground.

On the 18th of June Clinton returned from the South. He had captured Charleston, after that city for nearly forty days had made a gallant and heroic defence, and subdued South Carolina, as he believed. Leaving Cornwallis to push the English successes in the South, he now came back to take command of operations in the North. His movements gave Washington much apprehension; for Clinton at once began to em-

bark troops on transports as though he intended to make an expedition up the Hudson against the posts of the Highlands. Taking alarm Washington left a considerable force at Springfield, under General Greene, and moved with the main body of the army to Pompton Plains to be in readiness for any such attack.

But Sir Henry had not intended an expedition up the Hudson, but only to draw Washington from his strong position among the Short Hills, and on the morning of the 23rd of June, advanced rapidly toward Springfield. General Greene immediately notified the Commander-in-Chief of the march, who instantly started back to support his division. There was a warm skirmish between Greene and Sir Henry, in which the Americans were obliged to fall back, taking post on a range of hills expecting to be again attacked. They were too advantageously posted, however, for the enemy to attempt to pursue their success; so, contenting themselves with setting fire to the village, and laying the greater part of it in ashes, they began a retreat. Greene sent a detachment to save what was possible of the town, but his efforts were of little avail. Incensed by the burning of the village the militia joined Stark's brigade in pursuing the British, harassing them with such animosity that their flight became precipitate. At midnight they began crossing to Staten Island, and by morning had entirely evacuated the Jerseys and removed the bridge of boats which communicated with Staten Island.

Much to Washington's chagrin the fighting was over by the time he reached the vicinity of Springfield, though he had marched thither with all haste.

And now active operations ceased while Washington waited for the arrival of his allies, extreme poverty being one of the

reasons for inaction. Sir Henry Clinton, knowing of the expected arrival of the French fleet, hardly stirred out of New York, and was glad to be unmolested. On the 19th of July, the French fleet, consisting of eight ships of the line, with frigates and other vessels, under the Chevalier de Ternay, having about six thousand troops on board under the Count de Rochambeau, reached Rhode Island. The citizens received them with every demonstration of joy, and General Heath, then in command of Rhode Island, welcomed them in the name of the army. A few days afterward Lafayette arrived from headquarters, under instructions from Washington to concert measures for future operations.

But during the long voyage Rochambeau's army had been reduced by scurvy, sickness, and fatigue, and needed rest. Then, too, a second and larger fleet was to follow soon, so it was decided that it was best to await its coming before engaging upon any enterprise.

Meantime the British Cabinet had not been idle. Upon learning that a fleet from France had left for America, and that another was to follow, they despatched Admiral Graves, with six ships of the line, to reinforce Admiral Arbuthnot who commanded the squadron on the American coast, and also took measures to blockade the magnificent fleet destined for America in Brest. Admiral Graves arrived at New York three days after the French fleet entered Newport Harbor. The English fleet was now much stronger than the French squadron, therefore Clinton prepared for action without delay. Embarking about eight thousand men he sailed with the fleet to Huntingdon Bay, in Long Island Sound, with the intention of proceeding against Newport.

As this left the garrison at New York much weakened Wash-

ington, who had been reinforced by numbers of militia, crossed the North River suddenly, and advanced toward the city to attack it. Information of his march brought the British commander back in haste to its defence, and being too weak to attack so strong a force the American Chief was obliged to abandon the enterprise. Recrossing the Hudson he encamped his army at Tappan village, which lay in the midst of a fertile and beautiful country in the rear of the Palisades; a country noted for the abundance of its forage. And now the two armies lay waiting the movements of the fleets.

On the second of September an express informed Washington of the defeat of the Southern army at Sanders Creek, near Camden, South Carolina. After the surrender of Charleston, General Lincoln being a prisoner of war on parole, the command of the Southern Department of the army had been given to the victor of Saratoga by Congress. Gates had hastened south eager to strike a telling blow at the enemy. He had pushed forward too rapidly, and was surprised at Sanders Creek by Cornwallis; a surprise, however, that was mutual, as the British had not known of his whereabouts. The battle that ensued was an utter defeat for Gates. A defeat in which his "Northern laurels had been changed for Southern willows." He lost a thousand men, with all his artillery and ammunition, and the brave Baron De Kalb fell mortally wounded while leading the Maryland and Delaware Continentals, who fought stubbornly until overpowered. Washington was soon to learn that the old adage that misfortunes never come singly held good.

Close upon the heels of this dire tidings from the South, came a report from Rochambeau that the *Alliance* frigate from France had brought the news that the fleet that was to follow De Ternay had been blockaded at Brest, by the English. This,

of course, put an end to all thought of operations for the present, and the French and American commanders decided to meet at Hartford, Connecticut, to confer about what was best to be done.

The outlook was not hopeful, but Washington was soon to encounter the greatest misfortune that had yet befallen the Cause. On the 18th of September he set forth from camp with Lafayette, Knox, and their suites for Hartford where he was to meet with the French gentlemen. At King's Ferry they were met by General Arnold, who had recently been placed in charge of West Point, and crossed the river in that officer's barge. They were surprised to find Arnold at the ferry, but the latter explained his presence plausibly.

"I came down the river to establish signals as near the enemy's lines as possible," he said, "by which I may receive information of any movements of a fleet or troops up the Hudson, General."

"A good idea," approved Washington warmly. "My glasses, Mr. Hamilton, if you please."

The young aide produced them, and the Chief swept the river, eying curiously the *Vulture,* a British sloop of war, that lay about six miles below Verplanck's Point.

"She is very near our lines, for some reason," remarked the Chief in a low tone to General Knox.

"Sir? Did you speak to me?" questioned Arnold quickly.

"No, General," replied Washington. "Merely a remark to General Knox concerning the nearness of the enemy's ship."

"She is close," observed Arnold, and he wiped his forehead. "I must try to find out why. I have opened up rather an important channel of communication with the enemy by which I hope to learn of their intentions almost as soon as made."

" Then, General, if you are in correspondence with the enemy you must ascertain, if you can, what has become of Guichen," spoke Lafayette. De Guichen was in command of a French fleet which had been expected to come to the United States from the West Indies, but from which nothing had been heard.

" What do you mean by that, Marquis? " demanded Arnold.

Before Lafayette could reply, however, the barge touched the shore of the east bank of the river, and nothing more was said on the subject. Arnold accompanied them to Peekskill.

" We shall lodge with you Saturday night, General," Washington told him as they bade him adieu. " That is, Saturday the 26th; not to-morrow night of course."

" I shall expect you, sir," returned the commander of West Point saluting.

But Washington started on his return two days earlier than he had expected to do. It had been a notable conference, serving to introduce him and the French gentlemen to each other, and promoting a spirit of harmony. Mutually pleased they separated, Washington choosing to return by the upper route, through Dutchess County to Fishkill, and thence along the Highland road to Philipsburg. Soon after leaving Fishkill he met Luzerne, the French Minister, with his suite, on his way to visit Rochambeau. That gentleman induced the Commander-in-Chief to turn back and pass the night with him at Fishkill.

Washington and his suite were up before the dawn the next morning, for he was anxious to reach Arnold's headquarters by breakfast time, and they had eighteen miles to ride. The men with the baggage started earlier, and conveyed a notice to

Arnold of the Chief's intention to breakfast with him. When opposite West Point Washington turned down a road leading toward the river. Lafayette perceiving it, said:

"General, you are going in a wrong direction; you know Mrs. Arnold is waiting breakfast for us, and that road will take us out of the way."

"Ah," answered Washington good-naturedly, "I know you young men are all in love with Mrs. Arnold, and wish to get where she is as soon as possible. You may go and take your breakfast with her, and tell her not to wait for me, for I must ride down and examine the redoubts on this side of the river, but will be there in a short time."

The officers, however, did not leave him, except two aides-de-camp who rode on at the General's request to make known the cause of the delay.

Breakfast was over by the time Washington arrived at the Robinson House, on the east side of the Hudson, where Arnold had his headquarters.

"General Arnold has gone to West Point, General," Hamilton reported. "A matter of importance has come up, I should judge, for he left the breakfast table hurriedly after reading a letter that an express brought. Mrs. Arnold has been seized with illness, and cannot leave her chamber. But breakfast is waiting for you, sir, and General Arnold said that he would return soon."

It was strange, but Washington took the matter calmly.

"If breakfast is served, gentlemen, we may as well partake of it," he said leading the way to the table. "I confess to an appetite after our morning ride. When we have finished we will go over to West Point, and meet the general there. Or perhaps you would prefer to remain here?"

"We will go with you," spoke Knox and Lafayette simultaneously.

Hamilton remained behind, and it was arranged that Washington and his suite should remain for dinner.

"As General Arnold is at the Point, I expect that a salute will greet us," observed the Chief with a smile as they were crossing the river.

"I shall like to hear a salute among these mountains," remarked Lafayette, his appreciative glance embracing the bold promontory upon which the forts of West Point lay, the wild mountain scenery, and the picturesqueness of the sinuous channel of the river.

"And five years ago we had no forts to send forth salutes," spoke General Knox reminiscently. "A struggling people against a great Nation, yet we have held out for so long a time."

"And shall to the end, I trust," answered Washington.

"But of a certainty we shall," broke in Lafayette enthusiastically. He always identified himself with the Americans. "Though disaster come, yet have we always surmounted it in the end. 'Tis always darkest before the dawn."

By this time they had reached the landing at West Point, but to their surprise no salute had been fired. All was silent. Colonel Lamb, the commanding officer, came strolling down a winding path, and stopped short in surprise at sight of the Commander-in-Chief.

"Why, why, Your Excellency," he stammered in confusion. "I did not know you were coming. There should have been a salute."

"Sir, is not General Arnold here?" asked Washington in amaze.

"No, sir. He has not been here for two days, nor have I heard from him in that time."

Lafayette and Knox showed their astonishment plainly, but, though Washington was perplexed, he made no comment, and proceeded to inspect the works. About noon the party returned to the Beverly Dock, as the wharf of the Robinson House was called.

While ascending the path from the river to the dwelling Hamilton came hastily from the piazza to meet them. He seemed perturbed, and his countenance was anxious.

"General," he said speaking in a low tone as he drew Washington aside, "an express hath just come from Colonel Jameson at North Castle. He holds as prisoner Major André, Sir Henry Clinton's adjutant-general, who was apprehended as he was trying to regain the British lines. On his person were found papers, sir, which disclose the treason of ——" He paused as though loath to proceed.

"Of whom, sir?" demanded Washington sharply.

"Of Major-General Arnold," answered Hamilton slowly and sadly.

For a moment Washington did not speak. His face grew drawn and pale, and he seemed as though stricken to the heart. Arnold! the brilliant, dashing, daring Arnold! Arnold, the hero of Quebec and Saratoga! Arnold, his friend, and Schuyler's! It could not be. A long, long moment passed.

"Let me see the proofs, Mr. Hamilton," he said wearily.

Hamilton led the way into the house, and placed several papers before him. Washington examined them carefully. They consisted of an estimate of the force at West Point and its dependencies, of men to man the works, remarks on those works, a return of ordnance, artillery, orders for the disposi-

tion of the corps in case of alarm, and a permit for Major André to pass the lines under the assumed name of John Anderson. The papers were all in Arnold's handwriting. They were accompanied by a letter from Colonel Jameson, detailing the manner of André's capture, and one from André himself acknowledging his identity, and frankly declaring his connection with the plot to deliver West Point to the enemy. Sick at heart Washington let the telltale documents fall to the table, and buried his face in his hands. Great sobs that were no shame to his manhood shook his frame. For five long years he had contended with difficulties that would have crushed another man. He had fought veterans with raw troops; without ammunition, without food for his starving men, without clothes for their naked bodies. He had opposed the full military chest of a great nation with an empty treasury. He had been hampered by inefficiency, and had been bitterly criticised for retreating with his weak army before a superior force of disciplined, seasoned veterans. And he had faced all with undaunted courage; but before black treachery his strong spirit quailed.

"Whom can we trust now?" he asked sadly as he laid the papers before Knox and Lafayette for examination.

Hastily despatching some officers after the fleeing Arnold he asked to see Mrs. Arnold.

That lady lay in her room apparently distracted. Her condition was pitiable to witness, and convinced both Washington and his aide, Alexander Hamilton, that she was not implicated in her husband's treason. She protested her innocence; she wept, she raved, she evinced at times the utmost terror if approached, declaring wildly that the life of her child—a baby in arms—was endangered; that they meant to murder it. In short, she appeared as if crazed by sorrow. General Washing-

ton and his aides were touched with pity for her condition, and leaving her to her grief withdrew to the dining-room to discuss further measures.

The whole miserable story of the treason was soon unfolded. Arnold had arranged to deliver West Point and its dependencies to Sir Henry Clinton on that very day. Major John André, through whom the negotiations had been carried on, had come within the American lines a few days previous to conclude matters, and had been captured by three militiamen near Tarrytown as he was returning to New York. The militiamen, finding that he was a British officer in disguise, searched him and found the papers in his boots. At once they had taken him to North Castle, the nearest American post, and delivered him to Colonel Jameson, the presiding officer. That officer, not suspecting Arnold, immediately notified him by express that John Anderson was captured, which gave the traitor time to escape.

Later Colonel Jameson, discovering that his prisoner was the adjutant-general of the English army, despatched an express with all the papers to the Commander-in-Chief, sending the messenger to Hartford, as he was uninformed of Washington's return from that place. After riding almost to Danbury, Connecticut, the express heard of the Chief's return by the upper road, and hastening back, took the nearest road to West Point, arriving at the Robinson House four hours after Arnold's escape.

Knox and Lafayette shuddered at the narrow escape of the fortress as they examined the papers. The old plan of the English to get control of the Hudson River, and so divide the Union, as it could not be done by conquest was to be brought about by black treachery. Had the plot succeeded it would

have been fraught with the direst consequences to the cause of independence.

They were still discussing measures when two letters from Arnold were brought in; one addressed to the Commander-in-Chief, and the other to Mrs. Arnold. In the first he declared his wife's innocence and requested protection for her. Upon reading it Washington at once turned to an aide.

" Go," he said, " to Mrs. Arnold, and inform her that though my duty required that no means should be neglected to arrest General Arnold, I have great pleasure in acquainting her that he is now safe on board a British vessel of war."

For all efforts to apprehend the traitor had proved fruitless as he had pushed down the river to the *Vulture,* the presence of which vessel so near the American lines was now explained. Later Mrs. Arnold was sent to her husband at New York.

Every precaution having been taken for the safety of West Point the Commander-in-Chief turned his attention to Major André. He was taken to Tappan where the main body of the army was encamped, and placed on trial. A board of fourteen general officers judged him to be a spy, and as such condemned him to suffer the death of one. Sir Henry Clinton made every exertion to save him, but as he could only effect his salvation by delivering over Arnold, which of course he could not do as the latter had thrown himself upon his protection, André was executed at noon on the second day of October. A great deal of sympathy was felt for him throughout the country, and his fate was universally commiserated. But by all the laws of military warfare it was just. He had set ambition above honor, and paid for the lapse with his life. It was a mournful fate—and yet, how could a high-minded gentleman enter into negotiations with an officer to betray his country?

Benedict Arnold not only had the hardihood to write to Washington, threatening retaliation upon American prisoners should André be hanged, but he also had the impertinence to issue an address to the American people, defending himself, and a proclamation to the officers and soldiers of the army inviting them to follow in his footsteps. But, while both officers and privates might grumble at the hardships to which they were exposed, there were no " Arnolds " among them. He alone was a traitor to his country.

Until winter the army lay at Tappan devising plans for the capture of Arnold, but none of them came to anything. Washington, meantime, was putting forth every effort in his power to keep his army together, earnestly appealing to Congress to take proper measures about reinlistments for the next campaign. All plans for any enterprise had come to a standstill; for Arnold had been present at the Council of War held by the Chief on the 6th of September, and knew of everything that had been discussed. A great pall of gloom spread over the country, and in darkness and discouragement the year 1780 came to a close.

CHAPTER XXV

Caught in the Toils

THE year closed darkly; the New Year opened in despondency and gloom for the whole country. Never had the American Cause been in a more desperate condition. The South was being swept as by a scourge; the North was nearly in despair. All the resources of the country seemed drained to the uttermost, and men began to ask themselves if it were worth while to continue the struggle. Even Washington regarded the prospect with apprehension.

The army had been cantoned early in winter quarters: near Morristown lay the Pennsylvania lines; the Jersey line about Pompton, on the confines of New York and New Jersey; and the troops belonging to New England lay at West Point and in its vicinity. The New York line remained at Albany for the purpose of opposing a rumored invasion from Canada. Washington established his headquarters at the little village of New Windsor, two miles below Newburgh.

The British meantime carried on the most extensive plan of operations against the Americans which they had ever attempted. In this year the war raged not only in the vicinity of British headquarters at New York, but in Georgia, South Caro-

lina, North Carolina, and Virginia. It was reported also that an expedition was preparing in Canada under Sir John Johnson to proceed against Fort Pitt, and that many of the inhabitants were ready to join the invaders, as soon as they were given ample protection. The Indians too menaced the whole extent of the western frontiers.

To oppose these several incursions Washington had not more than seven thousand men, of whom upwards of four thousand might be relied on for active service. Congress had called for an army of thirty-seven thousand men to be in camp on the first day of January, but it was impossible to bring so large a force into the field.

At length a ray of brightness pierced the gloom, and lifted it. On the 17th of January a detachment of the Americans under General Daniel Morgan met Colonel Tarleton and his troops at the Cowpens, in South Carolina, and put them to rout. It was a complete victory, and cost the patriots less than eighty men in killed and wounded. Upwards of a hundred British officers were killed; twenty-nine officers and five hundred privates were made prisoners—eight hundred muskets, two field-pieces, two standards, thirty-five baggage wagons, and one hundred dragoon horses fell into the hands of the patriots.

It crippled Cornwallis seriously, for by it he lost a powerful and active part of his army, but it gave great joy to the country, and inspired it anew with hope. The ratification of the Articles of Confederation followed shortly afterward amid great rejoicing, and gave something like stability to the government which had been struggling for existence. Congress now wisely gave the appointment of Treasurer to Robert Morris of Philadelphia, " a man whose pure morals, ardent patrio-

tism, and great knowledge of financial concerns eminently fitted him for this important station." The zeal and genius of Mr. Morris soon produced the most favorable results. He pledged his own personal credit for articles of the first necessity to the army, and by an honorable " fulfillment of his engagements did much to restore public credit and confidence."

Late in December Clinton had sent Arnold with 1,600 men to the Chesapeake, and, displaying all his wonted activity, the traitor overran a great extent of country, capturing Richmond, which was now the capital, ravaging the country in all directions, and doing a great amount of damage. Baron Steuben, then in command in Virginia, had sent all his best troops to aid Greene in the South, and such militia as he could gather could not cope with Arnold's force. Still they harassed him to such an extent that he deemed it wise to fortify himself at Portsmouth, where he had taken post, and there Steuben managed to hem him in.

At this time a furious storm on the Atlantic scattered the ships of the British admiral, and damaged them to such an extent that Arbuthnot put into New York Harbor for repairs, and the blockade of the French fleet at Newport was lifted. Washington immediately conceived a plan to capture Arnold by attacking him by sea and land simultaneously so that he could not escape from the Elizabeth River upon which Portsmouth was situated.

Requesting Rochambeau to send the French fleet, then under command of D'Estouches, successor to De Ternay who had died, and a detachment of his land forces to the Chesapeake, Washington at the same time sent Lafayette thither with a detachment of twelve hundred infantry.

" You are to do no act whatever with Arnold," were the

Chief's instructions to the Marquis, "that would screen him from the punishment due to his treason and desertion, which, if he should fall into your hands, you will execute in the most summary way."

But part of the French fleet, under command of De Tilley, had already left Narragansett Bay, with orders to attempt the destruction of the British fleet in the Chesapeake. They took or destroyed ten small vessels, and captured the *Romulus,* which contained papers that held Arnold's instructions. They then returned to Newport, having accomplished nothing concerning Arnold.

Anxious to have coöperation with Lafayette Washington went to Newport, and prevailed upon D'Estouches to proceed to the Chesapeake with his whole fleet, and a land force. It seemed to be fated that whatever plans were made for the capture of Benedict Arnold should be marred by some untoward event. And so with this. The English admiral, Arbuthnot, followed the French fleet closely, overtaking it at the entrance of the Chesapeake. A hard battle ensued, in which the French were driven back to Newport. And so the plan failed because the French had not been quick enough to block the mouth of the Chesapeake.

Washington was greatly disappointed. He had felt exultant when the fleet had sailed from Newport Harbor on the evening of March 8th. "The whole fleet went out with a fair wind this evening about sunset," he had written to Lafayette. But he was accustomed to disappointments, and accepted the situation. Writing to Lafayette to turn his detachment to the southward as he relied upon him to support Greene, he turned his attention toward perfecting plans for an attempt upon New York City.

And meantime Greene had met Cornwallis at Guilford Court House, and the action resulted in a victory for Cornwallis; a most disastrous victory. "The British had the name; the Americans the good consequences of victory." [1]

Instead of pursuing the advantage gained, Cornwallis retreated toward Wilmington, North Carolina; from which place, after several days of rest, he set out for Virginia, and effected a junction with General Phillips whom Clinton had sent to aid Arnold. When Washington received the information that Cornwallis had entered Virginia he at once sent Lafayette instructions to take charge of the defences of the State, and detached Wayne to his assistance. But the British force was of such strength that Lafayette dared not risk a battle, but did what he could, with so small a force, to encourage the country, and pushed Cornwallis, wherever possible, with spirit and courage. From tide water almost to the mountains the British commander swept Virginia while his cavalry rode whither they pleased. And while Lafayette and Earl Cornwallis manœuvered in Virginia Washington was planning an attack against New York.

Early in May, the Count de Barras, who had been appointed to the command of the French fleet stationed on the American coast, arrived in Boston, bringing the long expected information from the cabinet at Versailles, respecting the naval armament designed to act in the American seas. Twenty ships of the line, to be commanded by the Count de Grasse, were destined for the West Indies, twelve of which were to proceed to the Continent of America, and might be expected to arrive in the month of July.

On the 18th of May Washington, with Generals Knox and

[1] Ramsey.

Du Portail and their suites, set forth from headquarters at New Windsor for an interview with Rochambeau and Admiral de Barras, hoping to concert with them a plan to attack New York. It had long been a cherished hope with him that he might drive the enemy from the city and island of New York, and the time seemed ripe for its accomplishment. The meeting with the French gentlemen at Hartford was celebrated with the usual military courtesies, and then an earnest conference ensued. The conclusion of the matter was for the French army to march as speedily as possible for the Hudson River, and form a junction with the American army there, for the purpose of proceeding against the city. It was believed that Clinton could not maintain the post without recalling a considerable part of the troops from the South, and before this could be done the attack might be made. It was also agreed to send to the West Indies for the squadron under the Count de Grasse to sail immediately to Sandy Hook, and, forming a junction with the fleet under the Count de Barras, confine Admiral Arbuthnot to New York Bay, and act in concert with the combined armies in besieging the city. The French troops consisted of about four thousand men, exclusive of the force to be left to guard the stores at Providence. Immediately upon his return from Hartford Washington began arrangements for the enterprise, calling upon the Legislatures of the Eastern States and New Jersey to furnish as large a quota of Continental troops as possible. Such a force as he felt sure could be mustered he deemed adequate to undertake a siege of the city.

The prospect of the enterprise aroused the States from the apathy into which they had fallen, and vigorous exertions were made to fill their regiments. In spite of these efforts, however, when the troops left their winter quarters at New Windsor in

June, and encamped at Peekskill, the army under Washington did not amount to 5,000 men.

But after all the plans for the great enterprise came to naught. The French joined the Americans on the Hudson, and every exertion was made for its execution. Strong reconnoissances threatening New York were made, so strong sometimes as to bring on skirmishes, which kept the English garrison on the alert. Some intercepted letters of Washington's to Congress had also made Sir Henry Clinton well aware of the design, and he wrote to Cornwallis for reinforcements. He now received three thousand Hessians from England, and believed that he could maintain his post, and so wrote to Cornwallis, directing him to take post at some easily accessible place on the coast of Virginia as a base from which to work.

All summer long Washington threatened the city, but was reluctantly compelled to give up his hope of assailing it. The new levies were arriving slowly, and there was reason to apprehend that the number of troops necessary for besieging the city could not be procured. Then too the French admiral was unwilling to venture past the sand-bars which obstructed the passage into New York Harbor. And nothing further had been heard from De Grasse.

Matters were at this stage when the Chief received letters which changed the complexion of affairs. A despatch from the Count de Barras contained the pleasing intelligence that the Count de Grasse was to sail from the West Indies on the 13th of August for the Chesapeake, with between twenty-five and twenty-nine sail of the line, and three thousand two hundred land troops under the command of the Marquis St. Simon. De Grasse desired that everything should be in readiness to commence operations against the enemy when he should arrive,

for he was under orders to return to the West Indies by the middle of October. A letter from Lafayette at the same time informed him that Cornwallis had taken position at Yorktown, and was fortifying there. At once Washington's "soul was up in arms," and he saw the possibility of making a great stroke which, if successful, might terminate the war. He resolved to hem in Cornwallis, and capture his army.

The movement was immediately decided upon. All depended upon concealing it until it would be too late for Clinton to reinforce Cornwallis. He had been threatening New York all summer, so now it was easy to lead Clinton to believe that preparations for an assault upon the city were in progress. Camps were ostentatiously laid out, opposite New York, in sight of the enemy; a feigned assault was made on their posts; and Rochambeau marched forward as though to take part in these operations. A courier was despatched to Lafayette, telling him of the coming of De Grasse and St. Simon, and of the plan for the capture of Cornwallis. He was to see to it that the earl did not escape toward the South. If Wayne had started from the Carolinas he was to be brought back.

Leaving a sufficient force to guard the Highlands Washington began his march southward. On the 20th of August the American forces crossed the Hudson; on the 22nd Rochambeau arrived; on the 25th the march began; and on the 2nd of September the army passed through Philadelphia, and hastened on toward the head of the Chesapeake.

The march through Philadelphia was a species of triumph. The windows were filled with ladies waving handkerchiefs and uttering exclamations of joy. The "ragged Continentals" came first, with their cannon and torn battle flags; and the French followed in "gay white uniforms faced with green," to

the sound of martial music. It was a strong contrast, but men with ragged clothing may fight as well as those with gay uniforms; and so the war had proved. A long time had elapsed since Philadelphia had seen such a pageant.

It was not until the troops reached the Delaware that Clinton suspected Washington's destination. Then he saw that it was the intention to strike a great blow at Cornwallis in Virginia. In order to divert Washington's attention, and draw him back from his march toward the South he sent Arnold with a strong force to attack New London, Connecticut, but the outrages committed by the traitor at that place and vicinity only served to heighten the exasperation of the patriot army, and nerve it to more vigorous action.

Washington, with his staff, travelled a little in advance of Rochambeau. When he arrived at Chester he received the great news that De Grasse with the French fleet had arrived in the lower Chesapeake. He returned on the road that he might give this information himself to the French Commander. So delighted was he that he waved his hat enthusiastically, and exhibited the greatest joy. And well he might. After many disappointments everything, for once, was going like clockwork.

At the Head of Elk the bulk of the forces were embarked on transports which carried them down the Chesapeake to the mouth of the James River. The rest went to Annapolis by the aid of the French frigates, and then marched overland.

And in the meantime, while the Northern army was making its march, important events had occurred in Virginia. Lord Cornwallis had erected works at Yorktown, and was confident of his ability to repulse any assault. The movements of Washington and the approach of De Grasse were both unknown to

him. He felt secure in his strong position, with only Lafayette opposed to him, and waited without apprehension until he could be reinforced by Sir Henry Clinton, or a fleet was sent to transfer him to New York.

So secretly was the net drawn around him that he was caught in its toils before he was aware. It was not until the arrival of the French fleet under De Grasse that he awoke to his danger. Then he was completely hemmed in by land, and De Grasse cut off his retreat by water. His perilous situation was now plain to him, and he sent urgent messages to Clinton to reinforce him. Instead of the reinforcements the American army made its appearance at Williamsburg, commanded by Washington.

As soon as Washington reached Williamsburg he visited the Count de Grasse on board his flagship, the *Ville de Paris,* in Lynnhaven Bay. The plan of operations was decided upon, and the two parted mutually pleased with each other.

On the 25th of September all of the troops were concentrated at Williamsburg, and ready to march on Yorktown. They numbered eleven or twelve thousand regulars, and about five thousand militia under General Nelson. On the morning of the 28th the whole force advanced upon Yorktown by different roads.

It was a joyous march. The troops were in the highest spirits, and went on through the bright autumn weather as men who see victory in sight. By sunset the army had passed over the short distance, and bivouacked within about two miles of Yorktown.

Yorktown was a little village, containing about sixty houses, lying on the south bank of the York River, where the long peninsula between the James and the York Rivers was only about eight miles wide. The town was flanked by deep ravines

and creeks falling into the York River. It was surrounded by seven redoubts, intrenchments, field-works, and abatis of felled trees. On the opposite bank was Gloucester Point, a piece of land projecting deep into the river, narrowing it at that place to the width of one mile. It too was well fortified, and before it lay a small force of British war-ships, the channel being obstructed lower down by sunken vessels. Thus strongly posted in these two places Lord Cornwallis awaited attack.

Washington's line formed a crescent, at a distance of nearly two miles from the British works, each wing resting upon the York River. On the right were the American troops under the immediate command of Lafayette, on the left the French under Rochambeau. The fleet of De Grasse remained at Lynnhaven Bay, to beat off any naval force which might come to the aid of the British.

From the 1st to the 6th of October the besiegers brought up their heavy ordnance, and made other preparations. The evening of the 6th was very dark and stormy, and under cover of the gloom the first parallel was commenced within six hundred yards of Cornwallis's works. So silently and so earnestly did the allies labor, that they were not discerned by the British sentinels, and before daylight the trenches were sufficiently complete to shield the laborers from the guns of the enemy. On the afternoon of the 9th, several batteries and redoubts were completed, and the cannonade began, Washington himself putting the match to the first gun. By dark three batteries were firing, and all through the night the guns on both sides rained shot and shell at each other. Early the next morning two more batteries were opened upon the enemy. For nearly eight hours there was an incessant roar of cannon and mortars; and hundreds of bombs and round shot were poured upon the British

works. At evening red-hot shot set fire to the *Charon* frigate, making a sight of marvellous grandeur, for the vessel became one mass of flames from the water's edge to her mast-heads, all her spars and rigging being enwrapped in a torrent of fire. All night long the cannonade was kept up, and early the next morning another British vessel was set on fire and consumed.

The morning of the 11th found fifty-two pieces of artillery mounted, and hurling a storm of projectiles into the British lines; and that evening a second parallel was opened, between two and three hundred yards from the British works, which put all parts of the town within range. For two days shot and shell splintered and tore through the British works, levelling parapet and ditch, and silencing many of the guns with which the garrison sought to make reply.

Flanking this new parallel, and almost enfilading it by their fire, were two detached British redoubts, well in advance of their main lines. To put an end to their destructive fire, and also because they were supposed to command the communication between Gloucester and Yorktown, it was determined to carry them by storm. Nightfall of the 14th was the hour fixed upon for the assault, and soon after it was fully dark, six consecutive bomb-shells, fired from one of the French batteries, gave the signal for the sudden dash. Upon the instant two storming parties, one of French grenadiers and chasseurs, drawn from the brigade of the Baron de Viomenil and under command of the Comte de Deuxponts, and the second, of American light infantry, taken from the division of the Marquis de Lafayette and commanded by Alexander Hamilton, advanced from the trenches. The Americans on the right, and the French holding the left. The Auvergne regiment was in

front there, and from its brave and honorable conduct had formerly been famous in the army as "Auvergne sans tache."[1] Rochambeau, who had been its colonel, made a personal appeal to them before the attack.

"My lads," he said, "I have need of you this night, and hope you will not forget that we have served together in that brave regiment of 'Auvergne sans tache.'"

There was a shout, and instantly the reply came that if he would promise to have the ancient name of their regiment restored to them they would suffer themselves to be killed to the last man rather than fail. The promise was given; and kept.

As the rockets were sent up for the simultaneous attack the Americans rushed furiously to the charge. It was made with the bayonet without firing a gun. So impetuous was the attack that the troops did not wait for the sappers to demolish the abatis in regular style, but pushed them aside, or pulled them down with their hands. Over the defences they leaped, assaulting the works with such vehemence and rapidity that their loss was inconsiderable. Alexander Hamilton was the first to mount the works, which he did by placing his foot upon the shoulder of one of his men. The redoubt was carried at the point of the bayonet, and the Americans cheered lustily. On the left the work was harder, and the garrison not so easily overcome. The French displayed equal gallantry, but suffered heavy loss from having stopped to remove the abatis according to rule. Lafayette sent word to the Baron de Viomenil that his redoubt was carried;—where was the Baron?

"Tell the Marquis," answered Viomenil, "that I am not in mine, but will be in five minutes."

The abatis being removed the French rushed to the assault,

[1] "Auvergne without a stain."

fighting with true Gallic fire. The works were soon taken, and by their bravery the regiment won back their old name. Washington, with Lincoln, Knox, and one or two other officers, stood in the grand battery watching every movement of the assaults upon which so much depended. The position was exposed, and an aide-de-camp ventured to suggest the fact.

"If you think so, you are at liberty to step back," said the Chief gravely.

Shortly afterward a musket ball struck a cannon at his side, rolled along it, and fell at his feet. General Knox grasped his arm, exclaiming:

"My dear General, we can't spare you yet."

"It is a spent ball," Washington replied quietly. "No harm is done." When the works were carried on the right and left, and the long shout of the French and Americans was heard, he turned to Knox and observed:

"The work is done, and well done." Then called to faithful black Billy Lee who stood at some distance, "Billy, bring me my horse."

The work was indeed well done. The occupation of the outer line of redoubts by the Americans virtually decided the contest. The British still held the inner lines, but these were commanded by the American artillery, and Lord Cornwallis saw that matters were desperate. Writing the next day to Sir Henry Clinton, he said:

"My situation now becomes very critical; we dare not show a gun to their old batteries, and I expect that their new ones will open to-morrow morning. . . . The safety of the place is, therefore, so precarious, that I cannot recommend that the fleet and the army should run great risk in endeavoring to save us." Which was certainly magnanimous and generous of

the British commander, for had Clinton sailed as he had given him reason to expect he might have saved Cornwallis. Fortunately for the Americans Clinton delayed, as he did in the case of Burgoyne, and succor arrived too late to benefit the beleaguered British.

Knowing that the town would become untenable when the second parallel should be completed, he made an effort on the 16th to check the assailants. Before daybreak Colonel Abercrombie, at the head of a detachment of three hundred and fifty men, gallantly made a sortie against two almost completed batteries, guarded by French troops, and captured them after a furious assault. But he was soon driven out again, and the enterprise was fruitless of advantage. Cornwallis, realizing that he could no longer hold the town, made a last desperate attempt to burst out of the toils, rather than surrender. He hoped by crossing over to Gloucester Point to surprise and disperse the French and American troops before that place, mount his men upon horses taken from them, and by rapid marching push his way across the Rappahannock and the Potomac, and on through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey to New York. It was a hazardous plan, but his only alternative was surrender.

Boats were accordingly prepared for the enterprise, and at ten o'clock on the evening of the 16th a portion of his troops crossed over undiscovered by the Americans. The men had scarcely reached the Gloucester shore, however, when a violent storm of wind and rain arose, which scattered the boats, and made the passage of the river too dangerous to attempt. With difficulty the boats were collected, the troops brought back from the other side under fire of the American cannon, for the allies were now on the alert, and the undertaking was abandoned.

It was the end. At daybreak, several new batteries in the second parallel were opened, and the earth trembled as they poured a torrent of destructive, and raking fire, into the crumbling defences of the town. The exhausted British could make but little resistance, and at ten o'clock in the morning a red-coated drummer boy mounted to the top of a British redoubt, and began to beat the parley. As soon as the firing ceased, an officer issued from the town waving a white flag, and desiring a conference. Conducted to Washington he reported that Earl Cornwallis requested that hostilities should cease for twenty-four hours while Commissioners should be appointed to arrange terms for the surrender of the garrison. But Washington would consent that the firing should cease for only two hours, during which time he asked that his lordship should make his proposals. Every hour counted now with the Americans. Clinton might arrive at any time with reinforcements, and it was expedient to close the surrender immediately. Accordingly Commissioners were appointed who met at the Moore House on the right of the American lines, and just in the rear of the first parallel. It was a prolonged conference, lasting throughout the 18th. But early on the morning of the 19th, the terms were transcribed by Washington, and sent to Lord Cornwallis, with the request that they be signed and returned by eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and the garrisons of Yorktown and Gloucester Point should march out at two on the same afternoon.

Cornwallis accepted the terms, and signed the capitulation. The British forces were surrendered as prisoners of war to the combined armies; the marine forces to the French, and the land forces to the Americans. The officers were to retain their side-arms, and both officers and soldiers their private property.

At about twelve o'clock the combined army was drawn up in two lines more than a mile in length, the Americans on the right side of the road, the French on their left. Washington, mounted upon a large white horse, attended by his staff, was at the head of the American column; and Rochambeau, upon a powerful bay horse, accompanied by his suite, was in front of the French. A great crowd of people from the countryside had assembled to witness the ceremony.

It was a brilliant spectacle. "The French troops in complete uniform, and well equipped, made a fine appearance. The American troops, but part in uniform, and all in garments much the worse for wear, yet had a spirited, soldier-like air, and were not the worse in the eyes of their countrymen for bearing the marks of hard service and great privations." The field was aglow with the banners of the French, and the Stars and Stripes of the new Nation whose independence was now achieved.

At about two o'clock the British troops marched slowly out of Yorktown, with colors cased, and the drums beating the British march "The World Turned Upside Down." They were all well clad, for Cornwallis had opened the stores and furnished them with new suits for the capitulation. Over the field settled a deep silence as they marched forth. They had fought well, and brave men do not cheer over the humiliation of a foe. They were led by General O'Hara, for Cornwallis, pleading illness, did not appear. Riding up to Washington O'Hara saluted, and apologized for the absence of Lord Cornwallis. Washington saluted in response, and pointed to Major-General Lincoln as the officer who was to receive the submission of the garrison. Only the year before Lincoln had been obliged to make a humiliating surrender to the British, and Washington had arranged that he should take charge of the

surrender as a sort of compensation. O'Hara presented Lord Cornwallis's sword to Lincoln, who at once returned it to him, and the surrender was over. The British troops were then conducted to a field near at hand, where they stacked arms. Their demeanor was sullen, and they obeyed the order to "ground arms" with deep chagrin. Some of them threw down their muskets with a violence sufficient to break them, and Colonel Abercrombie bit the hilt of his sword from rage. The ceremony over, the troops were marched back to Yorktown, and placed under guard.[1]

And on the very day that Lord Cornwallis surrendered, Sir Henry Clinton sailed from New York with thirty-five ships, and seven thousand of his best troops to reinforce him.

[1] Details of the surrender based upon Thacher's Military Journal.

CHAPTER XXVI

Peace At Last

ON the fleetest horse that could be procured, Washington sent Lieutenant-Colonel Tench Tilghman, one of his aides, to Philadelphia to bear the joyful tidings of the surrender to Congress. On the day following the capitulation, in general orders he congratulated the allied armies on the victory; and, that none might be excluded from the rejoicings, those of his army who were under arrest were pardoned and set at liberty. On the next day, which was the Sabbath, Divine Services were performed in the several brigades and divisions. As the glad news spread through the country the citizens gave way to transports of joy, and from the entire Nation arose a chorus of thanksgiving and praise.

In England the feeling was far different. When Lord North, Prime Minister of the British Cabinet, was told of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, he threw up his arms as though he had received a bullet in his breast, exclaiming wildly: "It is all over!"

But to Washington it seemed by no means over. The British still held important posts in the Southern States as well as the city of New York. It was his desire to follow up the reduction of Yorktown by a combined movement against

Charleston, which, if successful, would completely crush the enemy's power in the South. He therefore wrote a letter to the Count de Grasse on the day after the capitulation asking him to assist with his fleet in the proposed expedition. But the orders of his court, ulterior projects, and his engagements with the Spaniards put it out of the power of the French admiral to remain longer in American waters. Reluctantly Washington abandoned the enterprise; for without shipping and a convoy, the troops and everything necessary for a siege would have to be transported by land with great trouble, expense, and delay; and meantime the enemy's fleets could reinforce or remove the garrison at pleasure.

So Washington had to content himself with detaching two thousand Continental troops, under General St. Clair, to reinforce General Greene. The rest of his army returned northward under General Lincoln, taking up their quarters for the winter in the Jerseys and on the Hudson, so as to be ready for the next year's campaign. The French, under Rochambeau, remained in Virginia for the winter to be in readiness to march south or north, as the circumstances of the next campaign might require. Early in November the Count de Grasse sailed with the troops under St. Simon for the West Indies. Upon his departure Washington presented him with two beautiful horses as a token of his regard and friendship.

Part of the British prisoners were sent to Winchester, in Virginia; part to Frederickstown, in Maryland; and the remainder to Lancaster, in Pennsylvania. Lord Cornwallis and the principal officers were paroled and sailed for New York.

Having personally attended to all these matters, Washington left Yorktown on the 5th of November for Eltham, the seat of his wife's brother-in-law, Colonel Bassett. It was Indian

summer, and a velvety blue haze hung over the land, pervading the atmosphere with the drowsy, dreamy influence of this mysterious season. But the Chief was oblivious to the mellowness of the sunshine and the balminess of the atmosphere, for his joy at the victory over Cornwallis was shadowed by the knowledge that his stepson, John Parke Custis, was dying. He had recently taken him on his staff as an aide, but unfortunately young Custis had contracted camp fever in the trenches before Yorktown. Realizing that his illness was fatal, the young man's one desire was to witness the surrender of the sword of Cornwallis. So he was supported to the field, to be present at the final triumph, and was then carried back to Eltham to die. Washington was very fond of him, for he had become to him as his own son. He had watched the rather wild lad develop into a promising man, fitted to take part in the public concerns of his country. He was now twenty-eight years of age, just on the threshold of life; and as Washington reflected upon his youth and talents he was filled with great sadness at his untimely call.

"Jacky" had been his playfellow and his companion on the farm and in the chase, and recently his comrade in arms; so, when he arrived at Eltham just in time for the last painful moments, he was overcome with emotion. Both Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Custis, who were present, were thrown into deep distress by the unexpected and affecting event. Beside his wife young Custis left four children, and now, to comfort Mrs. Washington whose only remaining child he was, Washington adopted the two youngest: Eleanor, a little dark-eyed girl of two years; and George Washington Parke Custis, an infant of six months. From this time forth these two formed a part of his immediate family.

The last sad rites performed Washington remained at Eltham for a few days to comfort the poor wife and mother, and then set forth for Mount Vernon, stopping at Fredericksburg on his way for a visit to his mother whom he had not seen for six years.

When the war broke out Washington was much concerned at the situation of his mother at the plantation on the Rappahannock. The boys had long since married, and save for the servants she was there alone. There was much danger from marauding expeditions, and so he had earnestly begged her to leave Pine Grove and take a house in Fredericksburg. Betty who, it will be remembered, had married Colonel Fielding Lewis and who lived at Kenmore, a beautiful seat in the suburbs of the busy little shipping town, followed up her brother's representations of the dangers of a residence at Pine Grove by entreating her mother to live with her. But to this Mary Washington would not consent.

"My wants in this life are few," she had replied to her daughter's fond importunity, "and I feel perfectly able to take care of myself."

So she had purchased a house in Fredericksburg, in full sight of Betty's spacious home, making no complaint at the radical change in her surroundings and habits, because "George thought it best." But daily, in fine weather, she ferried over to the river-farm, and made the rounds, inspecting fields, gardens, servants' quarters, and the barns, with an eye ever keen for disorder and neglect.

It was afternoon of November 11th, that Washington arrived in Fredericksburg with his staff. A host of memories assailed him as his glance swept the beautiful valley of the Rappahannock, bounded by the low hills curving against the hori-

zon. Beyond those hills he had known the velvet-soft quiet of nights in the mountains, and the care-free days of boyhood. Did no longing for them come to the veteran, as, leaving his aides at the place appointed as headquarters, he walked unattended to the long, low cottage on the corner of Charles Street where his mother resided?

She was awaiting him. No maid should open the door for her eldest born whom she had not seen for so long. And so Washington found his mother at the door to welcome him.

"George!" she cried, opening wide her arms. And the wearied Chief went into them as though he were once more a boy. For a long moment neither spoke; then the mother glanced up at him anxiously. "Are you well, my son?" she asked. Her keen eyes had noted instantly that there were lines of care upon his countenance which had not been there when she had seen him last. His face was graver; his skin less clear and more bronzed; his eyes, naturally deep-set, were sunken; and he looked worn and weary.

"Quite well, mother," he answered. "And you?"

"About as usual, George." Mary Washington's voice was still soft and musical, though she was now seventy-five years old. "Come in, my son. There is much to tell you."

With this she led him to "the chamber," a more spacious room than hers had been at Pine Grove, and entered into talk. A conversation in which neither mother nor son referred to the victory at Yorktown, nor in fact to any part of the great struggle in which he had been engaged. With quick intuition she had divined that he was "satiated with war-talk," and hungered for the homely converse of olden times. So she told him of old friends, of the many grandchildren that were growing up about her knees, of all the olden times and places; and

Washington laughed a little when she told him that his brother Samuel had taken unto himself a fifth wife.

"I have been requested to attend the Peace Ball, George," she informed him presently. "The citizens are giving it in honor of the great victory. It is to be a grand occasion, I hear. All the French officers are to be there. Have they spoken to you about it?"

"Yes, mother; they wish me to attend. It is little to my liking at present with poor Custis's death so recent; but private woe must not be allowed to dampen public rejoicing. What said you to the management?"

Madam Washington smiled as she rejoined: "I told them that my dancing days were pretty well over, but that if my coming would contribute to the general pleasure I would attend."

"I am glad of that, mother. The French gentlemen all wish to meet you."

And so it came about that Washington and his mother went together to the ball held in honor of the capitulation of Cornwallis. The town hall was hung with flags and festooned with evergreens, and blazed with lights on the November night of the festival. It had been long since Madam Washington had attended so gay a function. It was a brilliant scene with the glitter of French uniforms and the vari-colored gowns of the women who had donned such finery as the war had left them. Mary Washington herself was very dignified in black silk gown, snowy kerchief and cap which she deemed to be the only correct costume for a plain countrywoman who had been a widow for almost half her life.

A path was opened from the foot to the top of the hall as mother and son appeared in the doorway, and "every head was

bowed in reverence." With the deference that he always showed her Washington led her to a dais reserved for distinguished guests, and there for two hours she held court, the French gentlemen pressing forward eagerly to meet the mother of Washington. "From her slightly elevated position she could, without rising, overlook the floor, and watched with quiet pleasure the dancers, among them the kingly figure of the Commander-in-Chief, who led a Fredericksburg matron through a minuet."

At ten o'clock she signed to him to approach, and rose to take his arm, saying in her clear soft voice:

"Come, George, it is time for old folks to be at home!"

Smiling a good-night to all, she walked down the room, as erect in form, and as steady in gait, as any dancer there. One of the French officers exclaimed aloud, as she disappeared:

"If such are the matrons of America, she may well boast of her illustrious sons!"

The very next day after the ball Washington proceeded to Mount Vernon, but public cares gave him little leisure to attend to his private concerns. The place at once became a sort of military headquarters where he wrote letters of suggestion and counsel to Congress, and of direction to his widely scattered military subordinates.

It was late in November when he set forth for Philadelphia, where Congress received him with honors. Washington urged upon that body the necessity of maintaining a show of military strength during all negotiations with England. So long as the enemy held a post in the United States, so long as their fleets were cruising along the coasts, a state of war existed. In reply the President informed him that a committee had been appointed to make requisitions for a proper establishment of the

army, and asked him to remain in Philadelphia to confer with them on that important subject.

All winter long he stayed in the city in conference with the committee. Meantime, in England, the Lord North administration went out of power, and the advocates of peace went in; the United States anxiously awaited the result. About the middle of April, 1782, Washington left the Quaker City, and joined his army on the Hudson, his headquarters being at Newburgh; but not with any idea of an active campaign.

Early in May Sir Guy Carleton arrived in New York to take command of the British forces in America, Sir Henry Clinton having been recalled to England. He announced to Washington that he and Admiral Digby had been joined in a commission with reference to peace. There was nothing said about the independence of the United States, nor did Washington see any reason for ceasing to watch the British army and navy. In fact, it was an annoying position. The States were not at war, and they were not at peace. The army could not be dispersed until there was some sort of treaty between the two countries, and England seemed loth to come to an understanding. It was a severe strain upon the Chief, upon the soldiers, and upon the country at large.

At length the news of the long delayed peace was received. The treaty was at last completed, and a courteous note from Sir Guy Carleton to Washington informed him that he was ordered to proclaim a cessation of hostilities by sea and land. A similar proclamation from Congress was also received, and read in the evening of the 19th of April at the head of every regiment and corps of the army. After which the chaplains returned thanks to God for all His mercies. The attention of the men was also drawn to the fact that the day completed the eighth

year of the war, and was the anniversary of the eventful conflict at Lexington.

Many of the troops now went home on indefinite furloughs, but Washington still had on hand the closing duties of the war. There were many conferences with Sir Guy Carleton connected with the leaving of the British fleet and army, and numberless details to be arranged concerning the taking over of the various posts and places and property to be surrendered under the provisions of the treaty. As the time approached for the disbanding of the army the officers found themselves filled with sadness at the thought of their approaching separation from each other. Eight years of dangers and hardships had welded their hearts together, and made it hard for them to part. Prompted by such feelings the officers organized themselves into the "Society of the Cincinnati," named in honor of the illustrious Roman, Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, who retired from war to the peaceful duties of the citizen.

While waiting to hear from Sir Guy when he should be ready to evacuate the city, Washington issued a circular letter to the governors of all the States on the subject of disbanding the army, the claims of the soldiers to the gratitude of their own States, and his own retirement from the command. It was a letter "remarkable for its ability, the deep interest it manifested for the officers and soldiers who had fought the battles of their country, the soundness of its principles, and the wisdom of its counsels."[1] Four great points of policy was its chief theme; namely, an indissoluble union of the States; a sacred regard for public justice; the organization of a proper peace establishment; and a friendly intercourse between the people of the several States, by which local prejudice might be effaced.

[1] Sparks, "Life of Washington."

" These," he said, " are the pillars on which the glorious fabric of our independency and national character must be supported." The address was adapted to the state of the times, and its effect was most salutary.

This done, to while away the time that must elapse before the final completion of arrangements with Sir Guy, and also that he might better be able to direct the operations which would be necessary for occupying, as soon as evacuated by British troops, the posts ceded by the treaty of peace, he resolved to make a tour to the northern and western part of the State of New York.

A letter from Congress awaited him on his return, requesting his attendance upon that body which was now sitting at Princeton, in New Jersey. From August to November, therefore, he lived with Mrs. Washington and part of his military family at Rocky Hill, about four miles from Princeton. From this place he issued his farewell address to his disbanding armies.

At length the long-awaited notice from Sir Guy Carleton that he was about to evacuate New York City was received. So many persons and such quantities of effects of all kinds were to be conveyed away, that the event had been delayed until November. On the 14th of the month Washington conferred with Governor Clinton, and made arrangements to take possession of the city from which they had both been driven seven years before. The Governor summoned the members of the State Council to meet him in council at East Chester, and the Commander-in-Chief ordered a detachment of troops marched from West Point to be ready to take possession of the posts as soon as they were evacuated. Both the Chief and the Governor, who in virtue of his office was to assume charge of the

city, adopted measures for the preservation of order on the occasion.

The 25th of November was fixed upon as the time for the British exodus, and on that day Washington, accompanied by Governor Clinton and the detachment from West Point, took his station at Harlem. It was a cold, frosty, but clear and brilliant morning, and the American troops, composed of dragoons, light infantry and artillery, moved joyously from Harlem to the Bowery Lane at the upper part of the city, and halted. For the British claimed the right of possession until noon; so the Americans remained without the upper posts until the troops were removed from that quarter and marched to Whitehall to embark.

Then, amid the shouts of the citizens and the roar of artillery upon the Battery, the formal entry of civil and military authorities was made. General Washington and Governor Clinton, with their suites, on horseback, led the procession, escorted by troops of Westchester cavalry. Then came the Lieutenant-Governor and members of the council, General Knox and the officers of the army, the speaker of the Assembly, and a large number of citizens on horseback and on foot.

The British army and the refugees were all embarked in boats by three o'clock in the afternoon, and at sunset they were assembled upon Staten and Long Islands, preparatory to their final departure. Before they left the British flag was nailed to the flagstaff in Fort George, the cleats were knocked off, and the pole was greased so as to prevent its removal. But the Americans were not to be prevented from waving their starry banner by so small a matter as the removal of cleats, and a greased pole. New cleets were procured, a sailor-boy ascended as he nailed them on, and, taking down the British flag, placed

in its stead the Stars and Stripes, while the cannons pealed a salute of thirteen guns.

The war for independence was finished. America was free. May never a foe secure a place upon her shores again! May our starry banner wave forever over a country of wisdom, peace, and liberty!

CHAPTER XXVII

Under His Own Vine and Fig Tree

IN spite of the general opinion that Washington would be unable to give up public life, he followed his desires, and before Congress, resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief, and retired to Mount Vernon. Here, while he busied himself with restoring the house and grounds, rumors of discontent in the colonies began to arrive. The Articles of Confederation were too weak, and in Philadelphia on May 25th, 1787, a Convention assembled. The result of their efforts was the present Constitution of the United States. Two years passed in its ratification. When the time came to hold elections the people clamored for Washington. There was no opposition and on the 4th of March 1789 he was inaugurated at New York and began the arduous task of governing the new nation. His cabinet contained all the leading men of the time; General Knox was Secretary of War, Alexander Hamilton Secretary of the Treasury, Edmund Randolph Attorney-General, John Jay Chief Justice, and Thomas Jefferson Head of the Department of State. Trouble came at once. There was the delicate situation involving the seat of the capital. Washington solved it by moving the Congress to Philadelphia for ten years, and after that to a strip of land on his own beloved Potomac which

was called Columbia and established for all time as the Capital of the Nation. One inevitable sorrow darkened this trying period, the death of Washington's mother. It was expected, but when it happened Washington was overcome with grief.

The division of opinion between Hamilton and Jefferson led to many contests and resulted in the formation of the two great political parties that exist to-day. The continuous strife told on Washington. He was sixty years old and longed for the peace of Mount Vernon. But it was not to be.

In France the Revolution had weakened the bonds linking the two countries. Lafayette was imprisoned in Austria. This worried Washington. Then England and France went to war and the United States, being still in sympathy with France and hating England, wished to aid their old allies. Washington saw the danger of another conflict to the nation. He stood firm in his intention of avoiding being embroiled. Popular opinion swung against him. The arrival of " Citizen Genet " further complicated matters. His attempts to drag the States into the conflict created new difficulties for Washington. At last they were solved when Genet overstepped all bounds and the people's sympathy was withdrawn. Genet was recalled after his last attack on Washington, and for a time there was quiet. However, all was not gloomy; trade was prospering, inventions were being made, immigration increased, a treaty with Spain and one with the Emperor of Morocco made secure the peace of the States.

Washington had now served two terms. He refused a new election and John Adams became president with Thomas Jefferson as vice president.

His work was almost over. When the inaugural ceremonies were over he immediately moved toward the door.

"Instantly there was a rush from the gallery to the corridor that threatened the loss of life and limb, so eager were the throng to catch a last look at one who had so long been the object of public veneration. When Washington was in the street, he waved his hat in return for the cheers of the multitude, his countenance radiant with benignity, his gray hairs streaming in the wind. The crowd followed him to his own door; there, turning round, his countenance assumed a grave almost melancholy expression, and his eyes were bathed in tears, his emotions were too great for utterance, and only by gestures could he convey his thanks and his farewell blessing." [1]

In the evening a splendid banquet was given to him by the citizens of Philadelphia in the Amphitheatre, which was decorated with emblematic paintings. Among them, one represented the home of his heart—Mount Vernon.

Avoiding the demonstrations of the people as much as possible, Washington went at once from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon. He was accompanied by Mrs. Washington, her granddaughter, Miss Nelly Custis, and George Washington Lafayette, with his preceptor.

The latter, Lafayette's son, was now seventeen years old, and had spent two years in America with his tutor, Monsieur Frestel, under the care of Washington. Lafayette himself, at this time, was in prison at Olmültz, in Austria. Washington had exhausted every effort of American diplomacy to obtain his freedom, but in vain. The imprisonment of his friend was among the things that had saddened his last days in the Federal Capital.

It was a joyful home-coming. As always, however, after one of his long absences, Washington found everything on the es-

[1] Washington Irving, "Life of Washington."

tate in need of attention. He immediately began the building of a house for the reception and safe keeping of his military, civil, and private papers, and the confusion attendant upon being surrounded by joiners, masons, and painters was a welcome relief from the cares of State.

For they were pleasant days; these last ones at Mount Vernon. While they were busy ones Washington relaxed more, and gave himself up to domestic ease more than ever before. The duties and pleasures of his farm were diversified by social enjoyments, and he renewed his youth by his interest in his granddaughter, and her young company. Nelly Custis was a great favorite with Washington. She was vivacious and witty, and pleased the general with her lively sallies, often overcoming his habitual gravity, and surprising him into a hearty laugh. It was said of her that she was the only one who was not afraid of him, and their companionship was one of uninterrupted harmony. Washington loved her as fondly as if she had been his own daughter, and she rode with him frequently on horseback when he went to inspect the work on his plantation.

The beautiful girl had many suitors which fact caused her guardian much solicitude. This was allayed, however, when Lawrence Lewis, one of Betty's sons, fell in love with her, and she with him.

Owing to the overwhelming demands which the great host of visitors made upon him Washington had found it necessary to have help in entertaining them; so Lawrence was asked to make his home at Mount Vernon in order to relieve his uncle of some of these duties. He was Washington's favorite nephew, and it delighted him to watch the romance unfolding between him and his ward. They were halcyon days for Washington; with

THEY WERE HALCYON DAYS FOR WASHINGTON WITH LOVE AT HOME AND PRAISE FROM ABROAD

love at home, and praise from abroad, heaped up and running over.

And in the early autumn his constant solicitude concerning Lafayette was relieved by information received by George Washington Lafayette that his father had been liberated from prison. The delighted youth at once made preparation to join his parents and sisters, and sailed from New York in October, with his tutor, Monsieur Frestel, bearing letters of congratulation and friendship. But Washington's serenity was suddenly disturbed by the news that the troubles that had been brewing for a long time between France and the United States had at length culminated in a rupture between the two powers.

On the recall of Mr. Monroe the French government refused to receive the new American Minister, and when Mr. Pinckney presented himself the Directory ordered him to leave the country. The French followed this up by capturing American vessels, and injuring American commerce as far as they could.

After calling a session of Congress to consider the matter, Mr. Adams sent other envoys to France to try to adjust the differences of the two nations by arranging a treaty between them. After spending many months in Paris these envoys returned to the United States having been treated in the most extraordinary manner by the French government; being grossly insulted and neglected.

When the degrading treatment of the American envoys became known, the entire country was roused to indignation, and war with France seemed inevitable. Congress authorized the President to enlist ten thousand men as a provisional army, to be called by him into actual service, in case of hostilities.

Mr. Adams was perplexed by the belligerent duties thus de-

volved upon him, and was uncertain how to proceed. There were many questions to be answered, and but one person that he knew was able to answer them—George Washington. Therefore, on the 22nd of June, 1798, Washington received a letter in which the President unfolded his dilemma; saying in part:

"I must tax you sometimes for advice. We must have your name, if you will permit us to use it. There will be more efficacy in it than in many an army."

Washington had been watching public events keenly. He was too sincere a patriot to be undisturbed by the trend toward war, and when the leading men turned to him for counsel, gave it freely. The letters from the President, from Mr. McHenry, Secretary of War, from Alexander Hamilton, from others, now convinced him that his quiet would not be of long duration. But his entire life had been dedicated to his country in one form or another, and he would not contend for ease and quiet when the future of the nation was at stake.

In fact, the eyes of the country were now turned upon him. He had never failed them. With him at their head the people felt that they could weather any war. It followed as a matter of course that on the 3rd of July he was nominated in Congress as Commander-in-Chief of all the armies raised, or to be raised; and his nomination was unanimously confirmed the following day. Washington's fidelity to duty would not permit him to hesitate, and he accepted the commission. Principally from his home he began at once to organize the army. He had expected never again to be more than twenty miles from Mount Vernon, but early in November he went once more to the Fed-

eral City to consult with the Secretary of War concerning the making of the new army.

Alexander Hamilton had been appointed second in command, with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and General Knox ranking next as major-generals; an arrangement which offended the warm-hearted Knox, so that he impulsively refused to serve. For nearly five weeks Washington remained at Philadelphia, busily engaged in making arrangements respecting the force to be engaged, and considering the questions bearing upon the organization of the provisional army. At the end of that time he returned to Mount Vernon to conduct his part of the work by mail.

The cares and concerns of office, however, went with him to his retreat. He was followed by a crowd of office seekers none of whom were known to him, with their servants and horses, who ate up his forage, and household supplies; and, worse than all, consumed his time and strength. It was an irksome task to attend to them in a manner befitting Virginia hospitality. And after all there was to be no war with France.

That Republic became alarmed by the warlike preparations of America, and by the victories which American vessels were winning against their cruisers. By invitation of the French government President Adams sent another embassy to France, and they arrived at a solution of the difficulties between the two nations. Although there was no formal peace there was no longer any immediate threat of war. Every one breathed a sigh of relief.

Upon Washington's return from Philadelphia he found that Lawrence Lewis and Nelly Custis had become engaged. He was much pleased at this, and gratified that the young people had fixed upon February 22nd as their wedding day. As

Nelly's guardian he himself went to Alexandria to authorize the license for the nuptials.

Great preparations were made for the event. The mansion was decked with flowers and evergreens, and ample provision had been made for the wedding supper. The 22nd of February, 1799, dawned brightly beautiful. All the gentlefolk of the surrounding country had been invited, and by early candle lighting, at which time the ceremony was to take place, the guests were assembled in the great drawing-room.

It was a brilliant scene. Mount Vernon never witnessed such another one. Waxen tapers illuminated the drawing-room, and shone softly upon rich fabrics, " richer colors, stomachers, and short clothes, jewelled buckles and brooches, powder and ruffles." The stateliest figure there, however, was that of Washington. Nelly wished him to wear the splendid new uniform provided for him as Commander-in-Chief of the provisional army, but Washington would not. Instead he wore the old Continental uniform of buff and blue, in which he had planned and fought so many battles.

After the ceremony, in which the charming Nelly and her soldier lover, for Lawrence had distinguished himself on the staff of General Morgan, were made one, they danced the stately minuet and the spirited Virginia reel, and the room echoed with mirth and hilarity. One likes to think of Washington standing as sponsor for these young people: the ward he loved so well, and Betty's boy. Later he made arrangements to settle them near him on a part of the Mount Vernon lands which it was his intention to leave to them by will.

All through the summer that ensued he was busily concerned

with the affairs of his estate, attended to his voluminous correspondence, received and entertained visitors, and seemed in full vigor of health and spirits.

Summer and fall passed, and winter set in. There came a day in December when the sky was dark and overcast. That morning Washington wrote a letter to Alexander Hamilton, heartily approving a plan for a military academy which the latter had submitted to the Secretary of War. About ten o'clock he mounted his horse, and rode out as usual to make the rounds of his estate. He had noticed a large circle round the moon the night before, and about one o'clock it established its portent of bad weather; for it began to snow, and soon afterward to hail, and then turned to a settled cold rain. Having on an overcoat he continued his ride without regarding the weather, and did not return to the house until after three o'clock.

When he entered the house Mr. Lear, his secretary, came to him with some letters to frank, that they might be taken to the post-office in the evening. He franked them, but observed that the weather was too bad to send a servant out with them. At that Mr. Lear remarked that he must have got wet himself, as he perceived some snow hanging upon his hair.

"No," replied Washington. "My greatcoat kept me dry."

As dinner had been kept waiting for him he sat down without changing his dress. In the evening he appeared as well as usual.

On the following morning the snow was three inches deep and still falling, which prevented him from taking his usual ride. He complained of a sore throat, and had evidently taken cold from being so much exposed the day before. In the afternoon

the weather cleared up, and he went out on the grounds between the house and the river to mark some trees which were to be cut down. His hoarseness which had bothered him all day, grew worse toward night, but he made light of it.

He was very cheerful in the evening, as he sat in the parlor with Mrs. Washington and Mr. Lear, amusing himself with the papers which had been brought from the post-office. When he met anything interesting or entertaining, he read it aloud as well as his hoarseness would permit; or he listened and made comments as Mr. Lear read the debates of the Virginia Legislature.

Upon retiring Mr. Lear suggested that he had better take something to relieve his cold; but Washington shook his head. "No," said he. "You know that I never take anything for a cold. Let it go as it came."

In the middle of the night, however, he was taken extremely ill with ague and difficult breathing. Mrs. Washington awoke, and would have called a servant; but he would not permit her lest she should take cold. At daybreak Dr. Craik, Washington's old friend who lived at Alexandria, was sent for, and in the meantime Washington wished Rawlins, one of the overseers, to bleed him before the doctor could arrive. Half a pint of blood was taken from his arm. External applications were made to his throat, and his feet were bathed in hot water, but without affording any relief.

Between eight and nine o'clock Dr. Craik arrived, and two other physicians were called in. Various remedies were tried, and additional bleeding; but all to no avail.

In the afternoon he called Mrs. Washington to him, and had her bring two wills from his desk, which she did. Upon looking at them, he gave her one, which he observed was useless as

it was superseded by the other, and told her to burn it. He was rapidly growing worse, and realized that his end was near.[1]

"I find that I am going," he said to Mr. Lear. "My breath cannot last long. I believed from the first that my disorder would prove fatal. Do you arrange and record all my military letters and papers. Arrange my accounts and settle my books, as you know more about them than anybody else; and let Mr. Rawlins finish recording my other letters which he has begun."

"It shall be done," answered Mr. Lear.

"Do you recollect anything which is essential for me to do? I have but a short time to continue with you; should there be anything I must attend to it now."

"I remember nothing, sir; but I hope that you are not so near your end as you think."

"I certainly am," answered Washington, smiling. "But it is a debt that we all must pay, but I look to the event with perfect resignation."

Through the afternoon he was in great pain and distress from the difficulty of breathing, and frequently changed his position. Mr. Lear endeavored to raise him and change him with as much ease as possible.

"I am afraid that I fatigue you too much," Washington would say.

"No," replied Mr. Lear. "I am glad to do it, if it helps you."

"Ah, well," observed Washington gratefully, "it is a debt we must pay to each other, and I hope when you want aid of this kind you will find it."

And then, noticing that Christopher, his servant who had

[1] For the details of Washington's last illness, the author has drawn on "The Diary of Tobias Lear," kept of the President's last days.

taken old Billy's place, and who had been on his feet all day, was still standing—ready to do anything that would help his master—he said to him kindly:

"Sit down, Christopher; there is nothing more that you can do."

All through the long agony of the day and evening, while the death shadows gathered, Mrs. Washington remained by his bedside. For forty years she had met life's vicissitudes faithfully and lovingly by his side; now her spirit went with him down into the Valley of Shadow. They had grown old together, and the thought that consoled her in her grief was that she would soon follow him.

The day passed. Dr. Craik came into the room about five o'clock, and approached the bedside.

"I die hard, doctor," said the patient, "but I am not afraid to go."

The other physicians entered, and further remedies were tried. Washington submitted to them patiently, never uttering a sigh or a complaint.

"I thank you for your attentions," he said at length; "but I pray that you will take no more trouble about me; let me go off quietly. I cannot last long."

About ten o'clock in the evening he exerted himself to speak again, and gave Mr. Lear some directions concerning his burial, and said:

"I am just going. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Lear brokenly.

"'Tis well," said he. Those were the last words that Washington ever spoke.

And so died George Washington on the 14th day of December, 1799. Nay; he did not die; he lives; lives in his example.

The influence of his great life-work will continue to reach to the remotest period of time. "His is the mightiest name on earth—long since mightiest in the cause of civil liberty; still mightiest in moral reformation. On that name a eulogy cannot be spoken. To add brightness to the sun or glory to the name of Washington is alike impossible. Let none attempt it. In solemn awe we pronounce the name, and in its naked, deathless splendor leave it shine on . . . Washington."[1]

[1] Abraham Lincoln's Tribute to Washington, February 22nd, 1842.